

LANGHAM PRIORY

OR

TENDRILS CHERISHED

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE ORPHAN'S INHERITANCE."

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PREFACE.

BRIGHTLY and beautifully shone the sun after a soft warm July shower ; all nature seemed refreshed by the grateful moisture, and the thirsty flowers, which had eagerly drunk the large rain-drops, expanded their petals in renewed beauty, and shed forth a more fragrant odour. In the centre of a circle, cut out of the green turf on which I walked, grew a cluster of beautiful sweet-peas, trained over green sticks and wires, which enabled the opening blossoms to obtain the full benefit of the warm sunbeams.

As I walked round, the gardener passed by ; and, observing that one of the uppermost shoots had been blown aside by the morning breeze, he

twined the little tendrils of the young spiral through the eireling wires, and supported the fragile stem against the strong green prop; and then he knew that the morning breeze would blow against it in vain. I looked again, and on the ground I saw another shoot trailing mournfully along, without a guiding hand, upon the soil.—It had blossoms, but they were lost among the leaves and stalks, and the rays of the bright sun could not reach them: the rain had beaten them down on the damp ground, and the blossoms, which might have been lovely, were pale and dim, and some of them half imbedded in the wet mould.—It had tendrils, and, like its sister seions, it might have been the ornament of the garden; but no guiding hand had trained them aright; no firm green prop supported its weakness; and the tendrils, which should have enabled it to rise upwards, only bound it more elosely to the earth. Then I pitied the poor young flower, and tried to raise it from its cold damp bed; but I could not unbend without breaking it. It needed a more skilful hand than mine to raise it from destruction.

Weeks and months rolled by; and again, one fine autumn evening, I walked on that soft green

turf; and I looked for the beautiful flowers, but they had vanished, and all that remained in their place were some long, dry, withered husks, instead of those lovely blossoms: but then the old gardener passed by, and I saw him gather those withered husks, and carefully place the round seeds in his straw basket; and I knew that he would sow them in the spring again; and when summer came, and the warm sun, that the sweet flowers would spring forth again, and again they would be young and beautiful. And he looked on the shoot that lay on the soil, but he gathered no seed from its long trailing branches:—they had all decayed on the damp ground, and he left them to perish.

Then I looked on the two lovely children that were playing by my side, and thought how fair a lot was theirs in the garden of God; their young ideas were drawn forth, and the warm beams of heaven's full sun-light fell upon them, with their refining and beautifying influence; and many a lovely bud had already begun to expand its fair petals in the heavenly radiance.—And carefully had the early germ of right principle been cherished, and twined, like the young tendrils, round an

unfailing support ; and so the firm stem of christian character grew strong and beautiful.—And I knew that, though, like the seeds of the young flower, the earth would one day close over them in darkness, yet I knew that like it, too, they would spring again, and flourish in the vigour and beauty of immortal youth.

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HOME SKETCHES.



A SCHOOL-ROOM SKETCH.

THE noon-day sun gleamed pleasantly down the long avenues, and tinged the young spring foliage with a brighter glow, as its beams glanced through the library window of Langham Priory, near which were seated two fair-haired, happy looking girls, about the ages of twelve and thirteen, who were busily employed in copying some bold sketches of forest-trees. At a little work-table beside them sat a lady of maturer years, and in stature rather above the middle size. Her features were not regularly beautiful, and her face was pale ; but no one could read without interest the benevolent expression of her

dark blue eyes, nor fail to observe the highly intellectual character of the broad full forehead above. She gave an occasional glance at the progress of the drawings, and was likewise employed in reading to the young artists, and in questioning them upon what they had themselves read in the course of the morning's study.

"It is really a pity," she observed, "to shut out these warm spring sun-beams; but nevertheless, my dear Caroline, I think you must at least partly let down the blind, or they will sadly interfere with your sketch. What a lovely morning it is! After lessons we will take a ramble through the fields to the village, and call upon the poor old man who broke his leg last week."

"O, that will be delightful!" exclaimed Louisa; "and the cows were this morning, I saw, removed from the lower meadow; so that Caroline, with all her fears, may venture through it, without looking behind her at every step, as she did last week."

"I hope," said Miss Howard, "that, as the summer advances, we shall be able to go

out together, and take some sketches from nature; for you must not always content yourselves with copying mine; and we need not stray beyond the limits of our own park to find beautiful subjects for the pencil.—It gives me much pleasure,” she added, “to see, my dear little girls, that the drawing has not suffered this morning from the share of attention which you have at the same time given to my remarks; and it will be an encouragement to pursue the plan in future, and thus economize our time.”

“O, we know that old English history by heart!” exclaimed Caroline, with a half-suppressed yawn; “I declare I only read over those three chapters once, upon which you have been questioning us this morning; nor you, either, I think, Louisa.”

“Very probably, my dear girls; but a thorough knowledge of the history of our own country is so essential a part of the education of an English lady, that I thought it would be as well for you again to go through this abridgement, while you are engaged in reading the larger work; it will, however, be

very pleasant to procure some other amusing and instructive book, which I shall be happy to read to you while you draw; and if we can but prevail upon your dear mamma to join us with her work, I think the drawing-hour will be one of the pleasantest in the day."

"O thank you, dear Miss Howard," they both exclaimed; "that will indeed be delightful."

"And may we begin Cowper's Poems?" asked Louisa; "for you know you promised us some time ago that we should read them; and I want to hear something more from the author of John Gilpin; besides, mamma says she should like us to learn to read poetry like you do."

"I have not the least objection to our selecting this work, if your mamma approves of our choice; but now, my dear Louisa, it is half-past twelve, and quite time for Caroline to take her station at the piano: there is, however, one question more which I wish to ask you, upon the chapters which you have been studying this morning; which of you, I wonder, can answer it? What was the conduct of Henry during his illness?"

“ O, I can,” replied Caroline ; “ for I remember reading, that he was now more cruel and tyrannical than ever ; and the ulcer in his leg, added to his enormous corpulency ; which rendered him unable to stir, made him more furious than a chained lion ; so that every one was terrified to come near him : and one day, when his wife, his last wife, Catharine Parr, came into his room, (which she did every morning,) to see him, with very great kindness and attention,—one day, when she came”—

“ You can omit that little anecdote of his wife,” said Miss Howard ; “ I merely wish you to describe his general deportment.”

“ So I am going to do,” replied Caroline.

“ Then omit this anecdote, and proceed in more general terms ; time will not allow us to enter into such particulars.”

“ I don’t know what else I must say,” replied Caroline, somewhat disconcerted at being thus interrupted in the rapidity of her story.

“ Perhaps Louisa can help you,” said Miss Howard, looking towards her younger

pupil; "I have no doubt she understands what I mean."

"I suppose," replied Louisa, looking up, "you mean, that though he was very cruel and tyrannical at first, yet, as his end approached, he appeared to suffer the most poignant remorse; and, contrary to his usual custom, received the intelligence of his expected death with an expression of resignation."

"There!" said Caroline, "that was just what I was going to say, only you stopped me;—I was going to say that—"

"Yes," replied Miss Howard; "but I told you to omit the anecdote relating to Catharine Parr, and proceed with the more general account."

"I don't see that what Louisa said had any thing to do with the question."

"Why not?" inquired Miss Howard.

"Because it referred to the former part of his illness."

"I do not see that at all, Caroline; the words used were, 'his conduct during his illness;' why should they allude only to the

former part of his illness, and not to the whole of the time during which it continued; or why to the former in preference to the latter part?"

"Because he was not ill then."

"Not ill, Caroline, when he was almost dead!"

"No, he was dying."

"And are not persons ill when they are dying?" inquired Miss Howard, with some surprise.

"No, they are not," replied Caroline.

"Now, Caroline," said Miss Howard, "you cannot be thinking of what you are saying."

"Yes, I am; and I mean what I say."

"Then I fear you are committing the fault for which I so often find it necessary to reprove you,—you make assertions which you know to be absurd; any thing that suggests itself to your mind, in order to prove that you are not to blame, because you are too proud to acknowledge that you are ever in the wrong. You know, it was only yesterday morning, that I cautioned you against this very fault—when I corrected your French

exercise—for you then positively protested, until I insisted upon your fetching the book, that the mistake which you had made arose from an error in the grammar; and when you could no longer deny the evidence of your senses, you still persisted in being ‘*quite sure*’ that you had seen the word so written *somewhere*. I fear, Caroline, you are again making these silly assertions in a similar spirit.”

“No, I’m not,” replied Caroline; “for I do think so.”

“You know,” said Miss Howard, after arguing for some time with the obstinate child,—“for I will put the case for you, Caroline, in another point of view,—you know that it is customary for persons, when they are ill, to request the prayers of the church of which they are members; some of them you have heard prayed for, Sunday after Sunday; and many, perhaps the greater number, have died, and you have heard their names no more. Do you not think that it would be very silly to send to Mr. Robinson, our rector, and request him not to pray again for such a

person, for that he was no longer ill, as he was not expected to live many days?"

"No," replied Caroline, "I don't; I don't think it would be at all silly."

"Why, Caroline!" exclaimed Miss Howard, "I could hardly have believed that even your obstinacy could have carried you so far."

"Well, I do not think it is right to pray for the dying!"

"O, that is a different case, if you really think so," said Miss Howard, "and must give rise to a conversation upon an entirely different subject; tell me, then, why you think it wrong to pray for the dying."

"I suppose," said Caroline, hastily throwing down the pencil, with which she had been, for some time, vainly attempting to shade the tree she had sketched; "I suppose you would not think it right to pray for a person who was dead, that he might be restored to life again."

"Certainly not."

"Well, then, I don't see why, when people are very ill indeed, they should be prayed for; I think it is very wrong to pray for them to get well."

“ I agree with you, Caroline,” replied Miss Howard, now regarding very seriously her young pupil; “ I agree with you, that it would be hardly right to pray for returning health to persons in such a state, without proper expressions, likewise, of that submission which we should ever strive to feel to the will of God; and if such were the only prayers offered by our church, I know not that I could blame you for saying, that it would be hardly right to desire them for the dying.”

“ But they are,” interrupted Caroline, with great eagerness; “ there is no prayer for any thing, but that they may get well again.”

“ I can hardly imagine,” said Miss Howard, “ that a little girl, thirteen years of age, can possibly be so ignorant of the prayers in which she joins every sabbath-day, as really to entertain such an opinion; but we will examine them. Louisa, you have, I think, a prayer-book at hand; will you lend it to your sister, that she may find the passages to which she alludes?”

The prayer-book was brought, and eagerly

seized by Caroline, who soon as eagerly exclaimed:—

“ There, now !—I told you, and here it is —‘ Comfort and *relieve* them according to their several necessities ;’ and what does that mean, but making them well again ?”

“ Not exactly that,” said Miss Howard, with a smile, “ since there are other ways of comforting and *relieving* the sick, besides restoring them to health,—but go on.”

“ Well, here then,—‘ giving them patience under their sufferings ;’ you see, it does not suppose that they will die.”

“ You certainly are a most expert reasoner, Caroline ; but nevertheless I think you will have some difficulty in proving, that giving a person patience to bear his sufferings, can possibly mean taking those sufferings away.”

“ Well, then, what can this mean—‘ and a happy issue out of all their afflictions ?’—I suppose, at least,” exclaimed Caroline, with a triumphant smile ; “ I suppose at least you will allow that *that* means making them well again !”

“ Not always—for it may be a much hap-

pier issue to the poor sufferers, for God to decree otherwise, and remove them from a world of sin. Have you any thing more to say?"

"I don't know, I always thought it meant so."

"Then I hope you are now convinced that you thought wrongly, and that the prayers of our church are different from what you imagined them to be."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Then now, Caroline, as you have made this admission, we will go, step by step, back again: you do not now see any impropriety in desiring the prayers of the church, even for those persons who are so ill that we consider them beyond all hope of recovery—those even who appear to us to be dying?"

"Yes," said Caroline, with persevering wilfulness, "I think we ought not to pray for them to get well again."

"Nay, do not, Caroline," replied Miss Howard, "oblige us to resume this subject again; I agreed with you before upon that point, and I thought you agreed with me—

that restoration to health is not the only petition offered by our church for her sick members; you have seen what those prayers are; you have repeatedly joined in them; do you now think it wrong, I ask, to request them in behalf of the dying?"

"Well, if I were you," exclaimed Caroline, reddening with passion, "if I were you, I would never imitate Mr. Merton's boy, that you were laughing at the other day for saying over and over again, 'Two yards, ma'am, only two yards? you're quite sure that two yards will be sufficient?'"

Louisa, who had never before seen her sister so far forget herself, now laid down her pencil, and looked in amazement at Caroline, and from Caroline to Miss Howard; but the latter replied with a smile—"Though it seems so highly to offend you, Caroline, I must, indeed, so far imitate Mr. Merton's boy, as to ask you again—Are you quite satisfied upon this point?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Then we will now return to the point from which we have digressed. Tell me why

you think persons are not ill when they are dying?"

"Why, I think they are not ill then; they are more than ill."

"I allow that in these cases we generally say, 'very ill;' sometimes, even more strongly, 'very ill indeed;' still you know they must be ill; indeed it is the very extremity of their illness that causes them to be dying, so that still they must be ill."

"No, they're not."

"What then are they?" inquired Miss Howard?

"Why, they're not ill; they're—they're—*very* ill—*more* than ill," said Caroline.

"But Caroline," replied Miss Howard, "I do not think you understand me: when the sky has been very clear and bright, I have heard you say, 'How beautifully, how very beautifully blue the sky is this morning!' and although you used those superlative expressions, yet I suppose you would not contend that the sky was not blue, even though it were *very—beautifully* blue?"

"Yes, I should; it would be more than blue."

“ But still it would be blue,” said Miss Howard. “ What else could you call it?— you would not say that it was red, or green, or black ?”

“ No,” replied Caroline ; “ but I should not say that it was blue.”

“ What then should you say ?” again inquired her instructress.

“ Why, I should say, What a beautiful colour it was !”

“ Perhaps so,” replied Miss Howard. “ You really are very ingenious, Caroline ; but still, when required to name the colour, I think you must allow it to be blue.”

“ I suppose I should,” said the little girl, after some hesitation.

“ And by applying the same reasoning to another subject, Caroline, you will, I think, be prepared to admit, that persons who are very ill, even so ill as to be dying, are yet ill.”

“ Yes, I know ; but —”

“ Then now,” interrupted Miss Howard, “ you are ready, I hope, to go a step further, and allow that the question relating to Henry’s

illness, might allude quite as much to the latter as to the former part of it."

"Yes, I know," said Caroline; "but then I think—"

"We will not stay to hear now what you think, Caroline; and *I* think, that, having arrived at this point, you had better say no more; but gather up your pencils, and put away your drawing as quickly as possible; for a full half-hour has already elapsed of the time that you ought to have spent in practising your part of the duet which your papa wishes you to play to-morrow with Louisa."

"But I don't think—"

"We will hear another time what you do not think; at present, you had much better go, for you have already half an hour to practise after Louisa and I have set out on our walk; and if you are not very quick, you will not be able to meet us on our return."

It was not long before Miss Howard and Louisa were on their way to the village. After passing down the avenue of elm-trees, and across a few green meadows, their road lay through a shady lane, with high hedges

on each side, planted with trees, whose branches almost met at the top, and formed a pleasant screen from the heat of the sun ; the hawthorn bushes in the hedge-rows were covered with their wreaths of white blossoms, and the busy little birds carolled merrily among the branches ; but Miss Howard and Louisa walked on almost in silence, for the subject on which they were thinking was not a pleasant one to either of them, and it was almost a relief to see the snow-balls of the guelder-rose-tree which grew by the gate of Smith's cottage. They remained with the old man for nearly half an hour, and shortly after were met by Caroline, whose good sense, as Miss Howard hoped, had enabled her, upon reflection, during her solitary walk, to perceive the absurdity of her conduct.

“ I suppose, Miss Howard,” said she, “ that I have been very silly this morning ; but I don't know how it is, I really cannot bear to answer those questions that you ask me ; and I cannot help thinking that it would be better for you not to make me answer them ; indeed I do.”

“ I am glad to hear that you have arrived at the first supposition ; but the conclusion of your sentence marks a yet unhumbléd spirit, which I very much regret to find existing still. We need never be ashamed, Caroline,” continued Miss Howard, “ of acknowledging that we have done wrong ; ashamed of doing it, we may well be ; but to be sensible of an error is the first step towards improvement, and will never excite feelings either of blame or contempt in the mind of any person who judges rightly. It is very silly to imagine that there is any nobleness of mind in obstinately defending an assertion once made, however absurd ; I am far from wishing you to imbibe that servile spirit which would lead you blindly to adopt, without examination, the opinions of those around you, and would thus leave you, without any fixed principles of your own, the mere creature of the circumstances and the society by which you might happen to be surrounded. Firmness and decision are qualities essentially requisite to the formation of a great or a noble character ; but when you employ your firm-

ness in supporting an opinion merely because you have expressed it as your own, and not from a conviction that it is a right one, that firmness degenerates into obstinacy, and the object even of that obstinacy is a bad one; for it is only to gratify, or at least to save from mortification, that pride, which God says is wrong, and which it ought to be our constant aim to subdue. Always bear in mind this distinction, my dear Caroline, and pray that you may be enabled to be firm only in the defence of the right, and ready to acknowledge yourself in error, whenever you feel that you have been so.

“ I remember how much you admired the character of Abdiel, when I read to you, a short time since, some of the books of *Paradise Lost* :—

———— ‘ Faithful found ;
Among the faithless, faithful only he,’

is indeed a noble character; and we find, throughout the whole of the histories of the Old Testament, that God always bestowed the highest honours upon those who thus honoured him. Look, for instance, at Abraham,

‘with his children, and his household after him,’ serving God in the midst of an idolatrous nation; or at Moses, in the court of Pharaoh, where he might have been the acknowledged heir of Egypt’s throne, ‘choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin;’ these are indeed noble instances of heroic firmness, well worthy of our admiration,—examples, which we should all of us do well to imitate;—but so it is, the poor remnants of our Maker’s image within us are all corrupted; some run in a wrong direction, some sink into an opposite extreme; and that which, in man’s original state of innocence, might have been a fruitful source of virtue, becomes now, but too frequently, a fearful cause of vice.

“There is but one remedy for all this evil, my dear Caroline,” continued Miss Howard, as she glanced at the flushed and changing countenance of her attentive young listener; “He who originally formed our nature can alone renew it; and how can we be sufficiently thankful to him for his promise that he will renew it, in all who seek his help and guidance?”

“Dear Miss Howard,” exclaimed Caroline, earnestly looking in her face, while the tears dimmed her eye, and streamed rapidly down her burning cheek, “what shall I do when you are gone? no one else will ever have patience to bear with me as you do, no one will talk to me like you; I don’t know how it is, I get into a passion, and then, I hardly know what I am saying. O how very silly,” she added, “I have been this morning, and how *very, very* improperly I have conducted myself towards you, who are always so good and kind to me!”

“O Carry! you have indeed,” interrupted Louisa; “I am very glad mamma was not in the room while we were drawing this morning.”

“I am glad for her own sake that she was not,” replied Miss Howard, “but as Caroline is now sensible of her fault, Louisa, we will say no more; you have not yet inquired after the old man, Caroline: he is going on very well, and was more thoughtful of you, than you appear just at present to be of him, for I assure you he asked me very particularly how

the young lady was, who gave him a shilling the last time we went to see him. This was the first intimation I had that you had done so," she added, looking kindly at her young pupil, "and I suppose that is the reason why the doves have not yet been purchased for the new cage, though I know it was pronounced habitable a week ago, for I observed that Louisa too had a shilling for him this morning, for which he seemed very thankful."

"I have been thinking," said Louisa, "how sadly sin mars all our pleasures; dear Caroline has been unhappy, I am sure, this morning, and we have not half enjoyed our walk, because she was not with us."

"You are quite right, my love, and so you will ever find it; depend upon it, the better you are, the happier you will be: goodness and happiness, sin and misery, are generally, even in this world, linked together; for though their outward circumstances may be prosperous, and they may seem to have no care nor trouble, yet we have God's own authority for asserting, that 'there is no peace to the wicked.'"——

“And now, my dear children,” said Miss Howard, endeavouring to sympathize in their expected joy, “can you guess what pleasant news I have to tell you?”

“O we know,” replied Caroline, “for mamma told us this morning, that she had received a letter from Aunt Maxwell, and that she thought of paying us a visit before the end of the summer.”

“But I never place much dependence upon Aunt Maxwell’s thoughts,” said Louisa, “for there are always so many things to prevent her from doing what she thinks about.”

“I did not allude to that,” replied Miss Howard; “I have another piece of intelligence, which *perhaps*,” said she, smiling, “will please you, and I begged your mamma to let me have the pleasure of telling you. Mr. Barker is unexpectedly obliged to go to India, and it will probably be at least twelve months before he returns, which time——”

“You are going to stay with us?” eagerly exclaimed both the children.

“Even so; and now we must hasten home, or we shall not be ready for dinner.”

THE BROKEN LEG.

“COME, Caroline, you may venture to go on, without looking so anxiously all round you,” said Louisa Langham, laughingly, to her sister, “for I stood just now on the top of that green hillock, and there was not such a thing as a cow’s head to be seen through the whole country, except one poor solitary thing that was lying down under the shade of the trees in the corner of the field, and she is like I am, much too hot and tired to run after you; so Carry dear!” she added, untying the strings of her bonnet, “let us give up this game, and walk home quietly; we shall tire ourselves before aunt and uncle come.”

Caroline, meantime, without paying much attention to her sister’s harangue, was standing

with her eyes fixed upon the entrance of a narrow lane which they had just passed. "O but do wait a minute, Louisa," said she, "I am quite sure I hear the sound of feet coming down this lane, and I want to see what it is."

"A grand sight!" exclaimed Louisa, as two donkeys at that instant galloped round the corner; "stay where you are, Carry dear, they'll never surely be so rude as to run over their own kindred; I shall take care of myself," she added, bounding on to the slightly-raised footpath, "so I shall join mamma. Well, it is rather an extraordinary sight: one does not often meet with galloping donkeys. I wish we had happened to find some of the species when we were at Brighton last summer."

"And I wish very much," said Mrs. Langham, "that a certain little girl whom I know, would try to put some degree of restraint upon that sarcastic little tongue of hers. Indeed, my dear Louisa, it is a source of much uneasiness to me, to hear from you so frequently these satirical remarks upon others."

“O mamma,” interrupted Caroline, “indeed she was only in fun, and she knows I do not care for her, or she would not have said it; should you, dear Louisa?”

“I hope not,” replied Louisa, “for I am quite sure I would not willingly hurt any one’s feelings.”

“No, that I am sure you would not,” exclaimed Caroline, as she affectionately kissed her sister;—and indeed, mamma, I do not mind it, for I know it is only play.”

“I believe you, my dear children, and I do think that Louisa would not intentionally behave unkindly to any one, but a bad habit of this kind is much more easily acquired than lost; these remarks, indulged at first in harmless play, are very apt to create a satirical spirit, and few things are more disagreeable; besides, you know,” she added, looking fondly at them, “I am anxious to see my own dear little girls every thing that is amiable and kind, and therefore desirous to check at once any thing that would promote a contrary spirit. Even genuine wit, my dear Louisa, is a dangerous weapon, more espe-

cially in the hands of a woman ; its possessor should be endowed, at the same time, with no common share of benevolence, good sense, and more than all besides, of good *principle*, to keep vigilant guard over its exercise ; for it must occasionally bring with it strong temptations to sacrifice to its display some of the better feelings of our nature. Keep a close guard, my love," she continued, "against this growing evil."

"Thank you, dearest mamma," said Louisa ; "I will indeed try to overcome it, and to be, in every respect, all that you could wish me ; and now, dear mamma, shall I carry your book for you ? for you look so tired, you have walked with us rude girls, I am afraid, farther than you are able."

"I wonder if my aunt and uncle will be come," said Caroline, "by the time we reach home ! O I suppose hardly so soon as that. Let me see, it is four months since they were here. I expect Alfred is grown quite a nice little fellow, and master baby by this time will have left off his long frocks."

"I should think he would be fit for *us* to

nurse now," said Louisa : " last time they were here Aunt Maxwell was afraid of our touching him ; to be sure," she added, checking herself, " he was such a very little thing."

" He was not then two months old, and babies so very young require great care in the manner of nursing them ; I am not therefore surprised," said Mrs. Langham, " that your aunt did not trust you with him, for you know you are not particularly famous, Louisa, for your prudence : besides, remember that she has already lost three children."

" O yes ! that dear sweet little Lucy !" exclaimed Louisa ; " what a lovely little thing she was ! poor Aunt Maxwell ! she must indeed have been very sorry to part with that dear little child."

" And poor little Alfred !" said Caroline ; " did aunt tell you, mamma ? nurse told us he wept so bitterly when they told him that he would never see his sister again in this world, and then nurse tried to comfort him, and told him that Lucy was gone to heaven, and that if he were a good boy, he would go and see her there ; so, poor little fellow, when

he went down into the drawing-room after dinner, he asked his mamma, whether God had any frocks in heaven, 'because you know, mamma,' he said very seriously, 'poor little Lucy had only her night-gown on when she went.'"

"Poor little boy!" said Mrs. Langham, while the tears started into her eyes, as her thoughts involuntarily reverted to her own absent boy, and she felt, as she looked at her two dear girls, how ill she could bear to lose them. "Yes, your aunt did mention the circumstance to me, for she was saying how very difficult she found it to give to little children any correct notion of that future state of spiritual being, which indeed to those whose understandings are more matured is principally described by the sacred writers in negative language, rather than by any attempt to unfold to our earthly minds the nature of its blessedness."

"I suppose it is very difficult," said Louisa; "and yet, mamma, I think there is often something very pretty in the notions which little children form for themselves upon

heavenly things. Do you recollect that pretty little piece that Miss Howard read to us the other day? I think it was by an American writer, describing a little girl looking up at the sky in the evening twilight. She had been told that all the stars were made by God, so I suppose she thought that there were new ones every evening, and the first that she saw twinkle, she was so delighted, and exclaimed, 'Mother! dear mother! God has made a star!'

"And that pretty little piece that you learned, Louisa, from the Children's Friend," said Caroline, "of the little girl kneeling down by the bed-side, and praying for her little favourite play-fellow, 'Please God, let Lilly live!'"

"It is a very pretty little poem," said Mrs. Langham; "and I quite agree with you, Louisa, that there is something very pleasing in listening to the simple, infantine language, in which little children sometimes express their ideas upon such subjects. But, while I think of it, I wish to caution you not to take Alfred to the swing unless nurse is with you, and even then, I would rather that you did

not attempt to swing him yourselves ; you are not accustomed to little children, and are not aware of the great care which they require."

The party had not reached home more than an hour or two, when a carriage drove up the avenue, containing Colonel and Mrs. Maxwell, and Alfred, with the baby and his nurse. They were joyfully welcomed to the Priory ; not the less so, Caroline said, as their visit had procured them a day's holiday, and baby, after having been duly admired, was dismissed with Alfred to the nursery which had been prepared for them, whither they were soon followed by Caroline and Louisa.

"I cannot think, Emily," said Colonel Maxwell, addressing his sister, as they left the room ; "I cannot think how it is, that your little girls (though indeed they are not very little now) always express themselves, upon every subject, with so much ease and propriety, and never seem at a loss what to say ; they appear to be equally free from *mauvaise honte* and from forwardness : I think," he added, turning to his wife, "I think, Maria, our own Emily is not twelve

months younger than Louisa Langham, yet what a very great difference there is between the two girls."

"It is, perhaps, partly attributable," said Mrs. Langham, "to our custom of conversing with them; both Miss Howard and myself encourage them to express fearlessly and freely to us their sentiments upon every subject: of course we are careful to make them understand that they could not expect to be listened to except by those who take so much interest in their welfare; but indeed you would be surprised to see how companionable they are. It is a habit whose importance, I think, is not in general sufficiently felt; yet surely, the instructress, and particularly the mother, who neglects it, loses an invaluable opportunity of forming the minds, and strengthening the principles of her young charge."

"I don't know how it is; they certainly are two very nice little girls, and I should think it very likely that what you say has something to do with it," replied Colonel Maxwell; "for I rather think the old rule, that 'little girls should be seen, not heard,' is

pretty rigidly adhered to at Markham House ; is it not, Maria ?”

“ I cannot, of course, tell what the discipline of the school may be,” said Mrs. Maxwell, “ but it is astonishing how much Emily has improved, both in drawing and music, since she has been there ; and I had a very tolerable French letter from her last week, where she tells me that she is beginning to learn Italian.”

“ I am perfectly satisfied with her improvement in these things,” replied the Colonel, “ which I agree with you, my dear, has been very great ; all I complain of is, that in these modern fashionable establishments, the young ladies might as well be sent into the world without understandings, for they never exercise them ; and indeed it seems to be so little expected that they should do so, that, as one of our sensible lady-writers of the day has remarked, the apology, ‘ O, she has but just left school !’ is offered as a sufficient excuse for any act of thoughtlessness or absurdity — any display of ignorance of the common affairs of life, of which a young lady may chance to be convicted.”

“ You are quite zealous in the cause, Colonel,” said Mrs. Laugham, smiling ; “ but I hope you both remember your promise, that Emily shall pay us a visit at the Priory during her next holidays ; for it is the condition on which I consent to allow my little girls to visit you. Besides, you know she is my god-daughter ; so that I have a sort of claim upon you to let me know something of her ; and the children will be delighted to have her here.”

“ I am sure,” replied Mrs. Maxwell, “ that Emily will be delighted to come ; and the change of air, I think, will be beneficial to her ; for,” she added, with a sigh, “ *she* is not very strong.”

After resting a little from their journey, Mrs. Maxwell retired to prepare for dinner ; and the Colonel, as he stood at the hall door, hearing the voices of the children with his own little boy in the shrubbery, immediately repaired thither, telling his wife that he would rejoin her presently.

Colonel Maxwell was an amiable man, extremely fond of children ; and the simple,

unaffected manners of his nieces, with their sensible replies to his questions, delighted him exceedingly. As he approached the shrubbery, he heard them lamenting that Alfred could not have a swing, because nurse was engaged with the baby, and they had promised their mamma not to swing him by themselves: the colonel, therefore, engaged to keep guard over him for them, and Alfred was soon seated, while the children drew him gently backward and forward, until he became a little accustomed to the motion. Louisa would fain then have given him what she called “a good toss;” but the more prudent Caroline thought that it would be better to swing him gently, until they could have the framework fastened to the seat, which would keep him secure without any danger of a fall; and a joint petition then arose of, “Uncle!—dear uncle!—O do let us swing you!”

After many inquiries how he was to dispose of his long legs, the kind-hearted colonel seated himself, holding Alfred upon his knee, to the great delight of the children, and the no small amusement of Mrs. Maxwell and

his sister, who caught an occasional glimpse of his figure, through the trees, from their dressing-room window. After thoroughly tiring his two nieces, the Colonel remarked, that the bough to which the ends of the rope were fastened on one side, was not a very thick one, and hardly calculated for the support of one of her Majesty's colonels of dragoons. "And indeed, my dear girls," he added, "I would advise *you* not to swing here much more, until I have had it made more secure for you:—but that, if I mistake not, is the bell announcing that dinner will soon be upon the table; and here comes nurse for my boy. So farewell, Alfred!—and I think," he added, as they turned down a winding path from the shrubbery, "I think I see Dr. Langham wending his weary way up the avenue from the village."

"O yes! it is papa," exclaimed the children, as they quickened their steps with their uncle to meet him, their faces still glowing with the recent exercise.

"A general holiday, I suppose, in honour of our visitors!" said Dr. Langham, after a

friendly greeting had been exchanged between the gentlemen ; “ but, my dear girls, it is sadly too hot for you to be out ; had you not better now prepare your lessons for to-morrow, and come out again when it is cooler ? ”

“ We thought of doing so, papa,” replied Louisa. “ Miss Howard said she did not expect to return before half-past seven ; and she will be glad to find that our holiday has done no mischief, and that we are ready for to-morrow morning.”

The lessons, after an hour’s close application, were thought to be sufficiently studied ; and the subjects of their aphorisms for the evening were then discussed ; for Miss Howard had accustomed them to close the day by some useful reflection or maxim, which was generally suggested by its passing events.

“ Mainma has supplied me with a subject for an aphorism this evening,” said Louisa ; “ so I ought to thank her doubly ; but no ! ” she added, recollecting herself, “ that would not be my own, and I should not be acting rightly ; so I must think of another ; ” and she

leaned her head upon her hand, while her fair hair flowed in glossy ringlets over her young thoughtful brow; "Tell me, Carry, dear," she inquired, after scribbling for some minutes upon her slate, "tell me whether you think this will do."

"We should cultivate the habit of attending to our duty before our pleasure; then we should enjoy our pleasure more, and our duty will become pleasant to us."

"Very nicely, I think," said Caroline, "and now listen to mine, Louisa, for what you just before said, made me think of it."

"We are too apt to look to our religion for direction only upon great occasions, and forget that all our actions, however trifling they may seem, should be guided by its principles."

Half an hour before she was expected, Miss Howard returned, and the aphorisms, neatly copied upon slips of paper, were placed upon her table.

"Very well, my dear girls," said she, smiling, "but I fear you will not do much credit to my instructions in grammar, for you cer-

tainly have neither of you yet learned to 'write the English language with correctness and propriety : ' pray how is it that you have agreed together to forget the same rule ? "

" What rule ? " inquired Caroline, a little mortified, " I do not remember "—

" I think you will find it expressed in the eighteenth," interrupted Miss Howard, " that 'conjuncti^ons connect *the same* moods and tenses of verbs ; ' Louisa has connected *should* enjoy and *will* become, by the conjunction, *and*."

" O yes, I see," said Louisa, " it should be *would* become."

" And your sentence, Caroline," continued Miss Howard, with an expression of pleasure as she observed the change in her pupil's countenance, " your sentence would be rendered clearer by the insertion of the little word *to* ; your conjunction, *and*, would then connect the two infinitives, *to* look, and *to* forget."

" It would," replied Caroline, " I will alter it."

" I am glad to find the principle to which you allude, sufficiently strong, my dear Caro-

line, to enable you to acknowledge the omission; and indeed, my dear girls," said Miss Howard, "I am so much pleased with the sentiments of both your aphorisms, that I can well afford to pass over a slight grammatical error in the expression of them; though I wish you to be careful in avoiding such a one for the future. I cannot tell what may have given rise to Caroline's reflection, but I think I may safely judge from Louisa's, that to-morrow's lessons are prepared; for it would indeed be sad, to know so well the right, yet choose the wrong."

"O yes, they are all quite ready!" exclaimed both the little girls.

"And aunt and uncle are come," said Caroline, "so mamma said, as it was a holiday, we might drink tea with them this evening, in the drawing-room, though I think it was uncle Maxwell who begged for us to do so."

"And mamma told us," said Louisa, "to ask you, when you came home, to go down and see them, for aunt Maxwell says you are such a favourite of hers, you are so mild and gentle."

“She needed kindness and gentleness when I saw her last,” replied Miss Howard; “I wonder whether my two little girls, who know me *better*,” she added with a smile, “would give a similar account?”

“That they would, dear, dear Miss Howard!” exclaimed both the children, as they threw their arms around her neck, “for we know,” said Louisa, “that it is our own fault, whenever you seem to be otherwise.”

“A little fault, perhaps on both sides,” she replied, while the starting tear for a moment dimmed her eye; it was soon however repressed; “and now,” she added, “I will go into the drawing-room, take care to come down in time for tea.”

The little girls immediately repaired to the nursery, where they found Alfred in bed, and just asleep; but they were soon relieved from their disappointment, by nurse’s offer to give them a swing before tea, and they quickly led the way to the shrubbery.

The sultry heat of the day was now past, and a pleasant breeze fanned the leaves with that refreshing influence which seems peculiar

to our summer evenings, from its contrast with the glaring heat of the mid-day sun. The children, quite forgetting their unele's caution, suffered themselves to be swung somewhat higher than usual, when, suddenly, the bough of which he had spoken gave way, and poor Caroline was thrown to the ground : she uttered a faint scream, as she fell, and exclaimed, " O Louisa, my leg is broken, I am sure it is !"

" Dear, dear Caroline, I hope not ! which is it ? O do try to get up !"

" I cannot, indeed I cannot ; I'm quite sure it must be broken ! O stay, nurse, do not go away," said Caroline, as she saw her about to run to the house ; " mamma will be so dreadfully alarmed."

" But what can we do ?" said Louisa.

" Do you think you can bear us to carry you, Miss ?" inquired the nurse.

" Yes, I think I can, nurse, if you will put your arms round my waist, and then Louisa will carry my feet straight for me, and keep my leg from hanging down, for indeed I cannot stir it. O I'm quite sure it must be

broken," she observed, as the nurse lifted her a little from the ground.

With some difficulty they raised her as she requested, and Louisa proposed to lay her upon the sofa in the library, which was effected as quickly as she was able to bear it.

"It feels more easy now," said the patient little sufferer, "perhaps it may not be so bad as I thought, yet I think it must be; but dear Louisa, do not cry, you must dry up your tears for mamma's sake. O how I do wish it could be set without her knowing any thing of it till it was over. Pray do not distress yourself, nurse," added the thoughtful child, as she caught sight of her anxious face, "at all events it was not your fault."

"O no," said Louisa, "it could not be your fault, nurse; but uncle told us this morning his opinion of the bough, and we ought to have remembered it. Mamma will blame us, I am sure, very much; shall I ask Miss Howard to come, Caroline?"

"O yes, do," she replied, and Louisa immediately dried her eyes, and proceeded to the drawing-room; she whispered to Miss Howard

that they had a misfortune in the library ; and expecting to find nothing more serious than a window-pane broken during a game at Les Graces, or some similar proof of carelessness, she was shocked to see poor Caroline laid upon the sofa, and evidently in pain.

“ Why my dear Carry, what is the matter ? ” she exclaimed, hastening towards her, “ my dear child, what have you been doing ? ”

“ We have had a sad accident,” said the poor little girl, “ and yet we were not swinging *very* high, only this leg bent under me when I fell, but uncle told us this morning that it was not safe ”——

“ And you have sprained your ankle,” interrupted Miss Howard.

“ O no ! worse than that, I am afraid my leg is broken ; indeed I think it must be,” replied Caroline.

“ My poor child ! I hope not, do not alarm yourself, my love ; where do you think it is broken ? will you let me feel it ? ” said Miss Howard, kindly, for she had no idea that the child could bear with such patience a really broken limb.

“There, not far above the ankle, O please do not touch it! please do not move it! it hurts me so very much to stir it,” said the poor little sufferer; “do you think it can be set without mamma’s knowing?”

“I fear not, my love, but at all events it will be best to hear what your papa says about it; can you manage to let him know, Louisa, without attracting notice?” said Miss Howard.

The servant was carrying in the tea-tray when Louisa entered the drawing-room, and while Mrs. Langham removed some books to the side of the table, she contrived to whisper to her papa as he passed the window: he was instantly aware from her manner that something was amiss, and observing that there was “a beautiful sunset,” he left the room, Louisa very soon following him.

“Papa, do you think it really is broken?” she anxiously inquired, as she saw him gently examining the limb.

“I am not quite sure,” replied he, “but at all events I shall send James immediately for Mr. Graham, and then I will return to you, my dear Caroline; keep it quite still,”

he added, as he gently laid it down, and do not be afraid, my love; you know that, in any case, we will put you to as little pain as possible."

"It does not hurt me much when it is still, papa," said Caroline, when he returned to the library; "I am not afraid to hear what you think about it: I suppose, if it is broken, it will be very painful to have it set; but I think papa," said the patient little sufferer, while a long-suppressed tear for the first time stole down her cheek, "I think that God will help me to bear it patiently."

"I am sure he will," replied her father, fondly kissing her damp forehead; "we shall hear presently what Mr. Graham says; but whatever it may be, I am sure that you will be enabled to bear it patiently; for you know, my love, that nothing happens to us by chance, but that all our afflictions are sent us by a kind Father, and are all intended to answer some wise and merciful end. And now I will leave you with Miss Howard, and communicate, as gently as I can, this sad affair to your poor mamma."

"Do you know where Miss Howard and

the children are?" inquired Mrs. Langham, as the Doctor returned to the drawing-room.

"I left them," he replied, "in the library; poor dear little Carry has unfortunately had an accident; do not alarm yourself, my dear, I have sent for Mr. Graham, who I hope will soon set all to rights, but she has fallen from the swing, and ——"

Without waiting to hear more, Mrs. Langham immediately hastened to the library, followed by Colonel Maxwell; but when she caught the first sight of the poor child's pale, patient face, as she lay upon the sofa, she fell back, overcome for the moment, into the Colonel's arms; a burst of tears, however, relieved her, and resolutely endeavouring to command her feelings, she advanced to the sofa.

"Dear mamma, it is not much, said the poor little girl; "it does not pain me now, do not be alarmed, Mr. Graham will not be long in setting it, and I will try to bear it patiently."

"Bear what, my love?—set what?" exclaimed Mrs. Langham.

"My leg, mamma, I am afraid my leg is

broken ; but do not cry, dear mamma," said the poor child, the tears streaming down her own face, as she saw her mamma's fruitless endeavours to suppress hers.

"I hope it may not be," said Doctor Langham, who at that moment entered the room. "But here comes Mr. Graham galloping up ; James must have met him by the way."

"Why Caroline, my love," said the Colonel as he approached the sofa, "this is a very sad affair, how did you manage it?"

"Yes, indeed uncle, it is, but we never once thought of your caution when nurse was swinging us."

"Nurse was swinging you," interrupted the Colonel, turning to Louisa.

"Yes, unele, but indeed it was not her fault, she did not know that the swing was unsafe, we ought to have remembered it," replied Louisa.

Mr. Graham now entered the room, and at once pronounced the leg to be broken ; but he added that it appeared to be only a simple fracture, without any injury to the flesh,

and the bones were so little displaced, that they would soon be set without difficulty. It would be better, he said, to have a mattress prepared in the room where she was to remain, and by the time his little patient was laid upon it, Dr. Langham's servant would have brought him all that was necessary; "and then," said he, "we shall soon put all to rights."

A small French bed, on which the children had slept in the nursery, was still remaining there; and Mrs. Langham directed it to be brought down, and placed in her dressing-room, that Caroline might be near to her. This was speedily effected, and the nurse in a short time entered the library, with the intelligence that the man was returned from Mr. Graham's, and that all was ready up stairs for Miss Caroline."

"Now mamma, I shall say good bye to you for the present," said poor Caroline, endeavouring to smile, as Mr. Graham and the nurse prepared to carry her up stairs.

"I am going with you, my love," she replied.

“No, indeed, you had better not, my own dear mamma; Miss Howard will help me to undress, and then papa will come with Mr. Graham and stay with me, and Louisa will be there, and if dear Miss Howard will sit by the bedside, and let me hold her hand, I shall do quite well; indeed I shall,” she continued, observing her mamma’s unwillingness to leave her; “suppose I should make *you* ill, you know that will be worse than all. No, indeed, dear mamma, I shall bear it better if you are away, if you will stay here with aunt and uncle.”

The Doctor coincided in this arrangement, and Mrs. Langham reluctantly acquiesced.

The patient child was soon ready for the operation, and a servant was desired to summon Mr. Graham and the Doctor. “Wait a minute, one minute! Martha,” she exclaimed. “Dear Miss Howard, will you sit quite close by me, just here, and let me have your hand to hold, and pray that I may be enabled to be patient; if I should scream, mamma would hear me in the library, yet I did not like to ask her to go away, I thought

she would guess why. 'There now,' she added, turning to the servant after a minute's pause, "now Martha, you may go."

"Are you quite ready, my love?" inquired Dr. Langham, as he entered the room with Mr. Graham.

"Yes, quite, papa. Will you please stand there, where I can see you, at the foot of the bed, by Mr. Graham?—that is, if you like, papa."

"It will not be much," said Mr. Graham; "we will be as gentle as possible," he added, soothingly; "and you are so patient, that it will very soon be over."

Mr. Graham now commenced his examination of the fracture, which he found to be what he expected; Caroline bore all without shrinking, till the edges of the bones grated against each other, as they were pulled into their places; she then faintly cried "Oh!—is it finished?" as she firmly grasped Miss Howard's hand.

"It soon will be, my love," said her papa; "you have borne it very well." And in a very few minutes after, the poor little girl

was comfortably resting, after the excitement and pain which she had undergone.

“How long do you think it will be before I am able to get up again?” she anxiously inquired from Mr. Graham.

“It may possibly be only four weeks; but I think we must reckon upon five,” he replied; “we shall see how it goes on,—you would not like to run the risk of breaking it again?”

“O no!” replied the poor little girl, with an involuntary shudder, “but five weeks seems a long time to lie in one position, without stirring.”

“It does, my dear child,” said Dr. Langham; “yet it is very useful to us sometimes to be laid on a bed of sickness,—it gives us time for reflection, and teaches us many lessons which we are very slow to learn:—but we will try, my love,” he added, cheeringly, “to make it as pleasant as possible to you; and I trust you will not have much pain to suffer.”

“It will probably be painful during the night,” said Mr. Graham; “and it will be necessary for some one to sit up with Miss

Langham, as the leg will require to be kept constantly wet with the lotion which I will send down. We must try to prevent all danger from inflammation."

"*I* am prepared for that," said Miss Howard, with eager readiness to be of service. "Mrs. Langham, in her delicate state of health, cannot possibly do so—such a thing must not for a moment be thought of—and she would not like to entrust our dear little patient to any one else, I feel persuaded." "It will be a comfort to me," she added, "to sit up with Caroline; and I am certain I shall not feel sleepy."

As Miss Howard spoke, a warm tear fell upon the hand of Caroline, over whom she was still leaning; the poor little girl looked up in her face with an expression of the most affectionate gratitude, and, fondly kissing the hand she still held, exclaimed, "Dear, dear Miss Howard, how delightful it will be to have you with me! This is, indeed, kind!"

"It is, indeed!" said Dr. Langham; "but are you sure, Miss Howard, that you can bear the fatigue? We must not make you ill."

“ I do not fear it in the least, Sir;” she replied.

“ If you are quite certain of that, we shall be exceedingly obliged by your offer; Mrs. Langham will, I am sure, be perfectly comfortable, and poor Caroline delighted, with such an arrangement.—Louisa, my dear,” continued the Doctor, “ your mamma would like to come up.”

Mr. Graham then gave his instructions to Miss Howard, as to the management of her patient during the night; and, promising to call at the Priory early in the morning, he wished them all a good night.

“ Miss Howard has had no tea, papa, after her long walk; nor Louisa;” said the thoughtful Caroline.

“ Nor Caroline !” he replied, smiling; “but we must ask Mr. Graham about that.—And here comes mamma,” he added. “ So now, Miss Howard, I must indeed insist upon your going down into the drawing-room, and taking some tea with Louisa; and then you had better rest upon the sofa until your night’s watch begins.”

A VISIT TO THE INVALID.

“Is it not very kind of dear papa?” said Caroline Langham, as her mamma one morning entered her little room; “Is it not kind, mamma? Do you know he has been reading and talking to me for nearly an hour this morning; and he has so many things to attend to; it was very good of him to spend so much time in teaching a little girl like me!”

“His time is indeed fully occupied,” replied Mrs. Langham; “for I think he is quite as busy in the parish as he would be were he still its rector; yet, numerous as his avocations are, my love, there are few that he considers more important, or which are more pleasing to him, than that of instructing his own dear little girls;—and indeed, Carry,”

she added, smilingly, "this broken leg of your's appears to have established for itself a claim upon the attention of all, which neither papa, mamma, nor any one else, seems disposed to resist or question."

"Mamma, I could not have believed that three weeks could have passed away so quickly and so pleasantly!—you have all been so very kind to me," said the little girl, looking affectionately in her mamma's face; "but you cannot think how much I have enjoyed papa's visit this morning; it is such a treat to have a nice quiet hour with him all to myself; and this morning he has been reading to me my very favourite chapters—I mean those in St. John that contain our Saviour's conversation with his disciples before he was crucified. There is something about the whole of the Gospel of St. John—I can hardly tell what, mamma—but such a spirit of love and gentleness there seems to be throughout, I am never tired of reading it;—it seems as though he might well have been what he calls himself, 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.'"

"There is, indeed, my love," replied Mrs.

Langham ; “ and I think we generally see that those who are in distress of any kind, even arising from outward circumstances, when they open the New Testament, will take most pleasure in reading the Gospel of St. John ; while we almost always find that those who are sinking under the yet severer pressure of mental anguish, will look to his sacred writings for that sweet soothing influence which they seem so peculiarly calculated to impart to the broken spirit.”

“ O yes, mamma, so ‘ *soothing*,’—that is just what I meant !” exclaimed Caroline. “ It is like the feeling that the word *peace* always seems to bring with it. If we say happiness, or enjoyment, or even bliss, it does not at all seem to bring into one’s mind those sweet soothing ideas that peace does. I do like all the verses in the Bible that speak of peace ; that verse in Isaiah—‘ Thou wilt keep him in perfect *peace* whose mind is stayed on thee ;’ and these beautiful verses in the fourteenth chapter of St. John, that papa read to me this morning—‘ Peace I leave with you ; my peace I give unto you ; not as the world

giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.'”

“ There is, my love,” replied Mrs. Langham, “ something in the whole of that chapter particularly delightful, — something which seems to bring with it, almost more, I think, than any other, — gently stealing, as it were, over the heart of the stricken mourner, — that feeling which we call peace : — indeed, this peculiarly soothing spirit seems to extend its influence throughout the following chapters, to the close of our Saviour’s prayer for his disciples. The time and the circumstances under which we know them to have been written would, in themselves, impart a deep interest to them ; for if it be true, that we cannot do any thing consciously for the *last* time without a feeling of melancholy, we must surely listen with no common degree of interest to the last conversation of Him, who (‘ though being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God,) yet made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant ;’ and then, for our sakes, Caroline, ‘ being found in fashion as a

man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' I will show you, some day, Carry," continued Mrs. Langham, "some lines which were written by a very dear friend of mine, who has now entered those heavenly mansions, upon some of the first verses in the fourteenth chapter of St. John; and upon the seventh verse of the fifteenth chapter, I remember she used to observe, 'If it was expedient for the disciples to lose even the bodily presence of their Saviour, when by so doing they obtained the spiritual presence of the Comforter, what earthly friend can we lose whose place he cannot supply?'"

"Yes, indeed, mamma," responded Caroline; "and this morning, when I was saying to papa, how full of love all the writings of St. John appeared to be—he reminded me that St. John was one of those disciples who wanted Jesus to call down the avenging fire from heaven; and other instances he mentioned, too, of the same kind; such as Moses—the meekest man that ever lived—who yet was not permitted to conduct the Israelites

into the promised land, because ‘they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips,’—as though, papa said—‘as though God intended to show us the imperfection of even the very highest degree of merely human virtue.’”

“Yes, my love,” replied Mrs. Langham; “there is but one example of perfect virtue in a human form, and that one was divine. But I must go and fetch my work, Caroline, and then I will return to you; for your aunt and uncle are going out for a ride.”

“O mamma, do pray go with them!” Caroline immediately exclaimed, “I should be so glad if you would go; I have so many nice books to read, that I never feel lonely; indeed, I think, I never am alone long;—but, my dear mamma, you have hardly been out of the house since my leg was broken.”

“They are going on horseback, my love,” said Mrs. Langham.

“But, mamma, they would go in the carriage if they thought you would go with them; besides, Louisa and Miss Howard will be down here soon; for Louisa cannot go on

with all her lessons without me, and they always come as soon as ever they have finished; so do ask them mamma;—they will be so glad.”

“Thank you, my love; but I *have* promised your aunt and uncle that I will accompany them to-morrow, to call upon Mr. and Mrs. Ashton, so I shall not go out to-day, but I will fetch my work, and sit with you while they are away; and if Miss Howard and Louisa are coming, we shall be quite a cheerful little company. Why, I think, Carry, in this spacious apartment, of which you have so unceremoniously taken possession, you will hardly be able to find room for us all!”

“This dear little room!” said Caroline; “I do believe I shall be quite sorry to leave it; for you cannot think, mamma, how happy I have been here:—you are all *so* kind to me; so very kind;—several times, mamma, aunt Maxwell has brought little Alfred to see me, —he is such a nice little fellow,—and, somehow, I like aunt Maxwell much better than I ever did before.”

“ She is a very amiable, pleasing woman,” said Mrs. Langham.

“ I forgot to tell you, too, that yesterday, when Louisa was here,” continued Caroline, “ uncle came in to see us ; and he did amuse us so with tales of his adventures in India and Persia, and all about his introduction at the court of Persia !—O, and what do you think he told us ?—that he was sure we could not make a shirt ; and when we told him that we had made one for papa, he said, ‘ O, your mamma did half of it ! ’—so, we have promised, if aunt will let us, to make him one entirely by ourselves, without direction or assistance from any one, that he may see what we can do—though he says, he knows it will be such a curious affair, he shall never find out how to put it on, and he shall have one of the wristbands to button round his neck ;—for he seems to be quite sure that we shall put the collar on one of the sleeves, or make some such blunder.”

“ He does not know,” said Mrs. Langham, “ what industrious clever young ladies you are. Let me see,” she added, smiling, “ I do

think you were not more than three months in making the last."

"O, but then, mamma," replied Caroline, "we were at Brighton half the time; and you know we did not take it with us there."

"True, my love," rejoined Mrs. Langham. "Well, I only hope that the Colonel does not want his set of shirts completed very speedily, if you are to have one of them;—but here comes your aunt to pay you a visit, and little Alfred with her."

"O stay, aunt Langham! We have been looking for you," said Mrs. Maxwell, arresting her at the door; "here is a young gentleman who has a petition to present, that demands a careful hearing, and which I hope will obtain a favourable reply."

"Now, Alfred," she added, as she led him forward, "you are the bearer of the message."

"Papa, and mamma, and Alfred's best love," said the little fellow, "and beg that aunt Langham will let cousin Louisa come with us to the sea;—please do," he added, placing his little hand in her's, and looking coaxingly in her face; "please let her come, aunt Langham."

“We shall not be absent more than three weeks,” said Mrs. Maxwell; “it is our intention to visit Ilfracombe, and the north-west coast of Devonshire; and we will return this way, and bring Louisa back, if you will spare her; Emily too will spend a week with us, she had so long a holiday at Midsummer, that we must not keep her more than a week from school.”

“You are very kind,” replied Mrs. Langham; “it would, I am sure, be a great pleasure to Louisa to accompany you, but I think she will hardly like to leave her sister.”

“Will you let her come if she wishes it herself?” said Mrs. Maxwell, “and then I think we shall succeed;—this little fellow,” she added, as she pushed up Alfred’s hair from his brow, “has anticipated his future destination, and engaged himself as a special pleader upon the occasion; I am sure he will *try* at all events to be very eloquent, and surely Louisa will not let him lose his first cause.”

Mrs. Langham smiled as she replied, “I have no objection to allow her upon this

occasion to follow the dictates of her own judgment;—so, Alfred,” she continued, “we will hear what cousin Louisa says about it.”

“May I go and find Louisa, mamma?” inquired Alfred eagerly.

“Not yet, my dear boy,” said Mrs. Maxwell, lifting him upon her knee; “Louisa is busy now with her lessons, and we must not interrupt her. Can you repeat for aunt Langham, Alfred, that pretty little prayer that you told me last night cousin Louisa had taught you?”

“Yes, mamma,” said he, jumping down, and placing together the palms of his little hands, as he rested them upon her knee.

“God of mercy, God of grace,
Make my heart thy dwelling-place;
Let not sin and Satan find
A resting-place within my mind;
But let thy Spirit dwell within,
And cleanse my heart from inbred sin.
I pray, that when my soul departs,
We all may soon unite again,
Washed in atoning blood our hearts,
And rendered all quite white and clean.
And this I ask of thee again,
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.—Amen.”

“Dear little fellow!” exclaimed Mrs. Langham, as he slowly and seriously lisped forth his concluding line. “It is indeed a very pretty little prayer!”—“Alfred,” she added, “I wonder whether you can tell me what is meant by Inbred sin?”

“Cousin Louisa said,” replied the little boy, “that it was what made Alfred naughty and stamp on the floor, and scream, and fight; Louisa said she would teach me about it again to-morrow night.”

“I think cousin Louisa is very kind,” said Mrs. Maxwell, “to take so much trouble in teaching you,—but now, Alfred, mamma is going out, and it is time for you to go up to nurse. He is a great boy to sleep in the middle of the day,” she added, turning to Mrs. Langham, “but I think, during this hot weather, it does him good. Remember your promise,—I shall depend upon Caroline to see that I am not cheated.”

It was not long before Miss Howard and Louisa came in from the schoolroom, for the weather was still too warm to allow them to walk in the middle of the day.

“O Caroline!” exclaimed Louisa, as she affectionately kissed her sister; “so Mr. Graham has allowed you, to-day, to have your head propped up;—why uncle Maxwell will say you look like an eastern sultana, reclining upon your pillows.”

“It is a very pleasant change,” replied Caroline, “and I have been thinking, Louisa dear, that if I had my frame, I could rest it very easily here, before me, and go on with the bag that I was beginning to work for aunt Maxwell; that will be very nice, if you will be kind enough to fetch it for me.” And, “O thank you, dear Miss Howard,” she added, as her kind governess approached her bedside, “for that nice little book that you lent me this morning; I read two letters myself, after you finished the one that you read to me: what very beautiful letters they are!”

“Miss Jewsbury’s Letters to the Young?” inquired Louisa, as she re-entered the room with Caroline’s work. “O are not they nice ones, Carry? Miss Howard has read some of them to me, while I was drawing in

the library. After all, I think I should rather be Miss Jewsbury than even Mrs. Hemans."

"A sentiment I should hardly have expected from you, Louisa," said Miss Howard, "with your fondness for poetry;" pray tell us *why* you prefer Miss Jewsbury?"

"O, you know Miss Jewsbury was a poetess; but I think," said Louisa, "that though there is something very beautiful,—O yes, very lovely,—in Mrs. Hemans's poems, at least the few I have read of them; yet in her correspondence, I was rather a little disappointed, to find her not—not quite what I had always fancied her; and so, as to character, I would rather be Miss Jewsbury, who was so very good, than Mrs. Hemans, who was so very clever."

"You could not assign a better reason, my love," said Mrs. Langham; "but though I do not know any writings of Mrs. Hemans, that could be compared with Miss Jewsbury's, in the deep devotion of heart and spirit which they display, yet, in estimating the respective merits of the two friends, we ought to

recollect their differently constituted minds, and the different circumstances in which they were placed. Miss Jewsbury, I have heard, was early called to active exertion, and I dare say you have sometimes observed, that when the shoots from a young plant are checked they will frequently spring out afterwards with much increased strength and vigour. Mrs. Hemans, though struggling under the pressure of severe afflictions, was not forced by it into daily and hourly contact with the world around her : she must rather have shrunk from society ; and her melancholy feelings, her loneliness, and her disappointed hopes, would all operate upon a mind naturally sensitive, and a romantic imagination, till, more and more she lived in the ideal world of her own creation, and tinged every object around her with the exquisitely delicate and beautiful, though somewhat sombre hues of her own mind.

“ I could easily imagine,” observed Miss Howard, “ that such a mind as that of Mrs. Hemans, without the sustaining power of

religion, would, in similar circumstances, have sunk into hopeless melancholy;—with it, what a charm of sweet association she has thrown over every object she has touched.”

“Yes,” replied Mrs. Langham, “her writings, associating as they do the lovely with the good, deserve her friend’s comparison with the bridges of wild flowers that sometimes intersect the American streams. Nevertheless, Louisa, I quite agree with you, and, as you observe, ‘as to character,’ would rather see you, my love, Miss Jewsbury, than even Mrs. Hemans.”

“I thought you would, mamma; but I shall be little indeed like either of them, if I spend my time in idleness,” said Louisa, rising from the little hassock on which she had seated herself at her mamma’s feet; “I must fetch my work, for I brought Carry’s, and never thought of my own.”

“Wait a moment, my love,” said Mrs. Langham; “wait a moment; we have a proposal to make to you;” and as Louisa resumed her seat she passed her slender

white fingers through the little girl's glossy curls, and gently stroked them aside from her fair and finely formed forehead.

There was something very beautiful at the moment in that family group; and Miss Howard could not but think, as she raised her eyes from her work, that a painter would have looked upon it with delight. There lay the patient sufferer, her bright golden hair smoothly braided under a little white cap of thin muslin; her once rosy cheeks lightly tinged with the delicate hues of the ocean shell; while her soft blue eyes rested upon Louisa, with an expression of anxious interest: the green-house and garden had been robbed of their beauties to adorn the little table by her bedside, and several books were scattered around her on the snow-white counterpane; but her finger lay upon a little half-closed Testament, and just opened it sufficiently to show that she had been reading the Gospel of St. John. At the foot of the bed sat Mrs. Langham, in a loose white morning dress; and, if Time had laid his finger on her brow, and gently traced a line

which was not there in days gone by, he had left untouched the rich glossy brown of that smoothly braided hair,—he had not dimmed the lustre of that hazel eye, which now beamed with the hopeful expression of maternal fondness on the fair-haired girl at her feet.

“Louisa, my love,” she repeated, as the little girl looked wonderingly in her face, “your aunt and uncle kindly offer to take you with them into Devonshire; little Alfred, too, joins most earnestly in the petition that your papa and I will allow you to accompany them; and as Emily is to spend a week with you there, it will, I think, be a pleasant visit for you.”

A cloud immediately gathered over Louisa’s expressive countenance as she exclaimed, “A week, mamma! shall I have to be a week away from poor dear Carry?—do not you think they would wait until she is well enough to go with us?”

“No, my love, it would make their visit too late,” replied Mrs. Langham, “for they will be three weeks absent, as they purpose

rambling over the north-west coast, and visiting Ilfracombe."

"O mamma!" exclaimed the poor child, evidently struggling against the tears which, notwithstanding her efforts, dimmed her eyes; "have you quite settled that I am to go?"—

"Not quite, my love," said Mrs. Langham with a smile, "if it is so very unpleasant to you; but I thought you would like to see your cousin Emily, and I know you are very fond of the sea."

"So I should, mamma, and nothing would delight me more than such a trip, if Carry were able to go with us;—besides, I should not be at home on Carry's birthday, and she would be so dull here all by herself."

"O no, Louisa," interrupted Caroline; "do not think for one moment of me, for Mr. Graham told me this morning, that if my leg went on well, he thought, on my birthday, next Thursday week, I might be carried down stairs."

"Then I should not see you the first time you came down," said Louisa mournfully;

“but, mamma, you said you had not *quite* settled that I was to go”—

“No, my love,” replied Mrs. Langham with a smile, “I have not ‘*settled* it’ at all, for I told your aunt that you should choose for yourself.”

“O thank you, thank you, dear mamma! that was kind indeed,” exclaimed Louisa; “then I shall very soon choose, for though I am very much obliged to aunt and uncle, and dear little Alfred, I would rather not go with them now; that is, of course, unless you wish me to do so, mamma.”

“No, my love,” replied Mrs. Langham, “I wish you to please yourself upon this occasion, and am not at all dissatisfied, but rather pleased, with your decision.”

“Thank you, dear mamma,” said Louisa; “then if I do not see uncle and aunt, when they come in, will you please to tell them that I am very much obliged to them, indeed, and to dear little Alfred, for their kindness in wishing to have me with them, but that I would rather not leave—I would rather not go with them now.—Now Caro-

line, I am going to fetch my work," she continued, as she saw her sister about to speak; "I do think I shall finish to-day one of the slippers that I began to work for uncle Maxwell;" and she lightly tripped from the room with an elastic step, and that happy feeling which always results from the consciousness of having acted rightly."

"O mamma," exclaimed Louisa, as she returned to the room with her work; "what do you think? we are going to make a shirt for uncle Maxwell."

"So Caroline tells me, my love," replied Mrs. Langham.

"Yes, entirely ourselves," continued Louisa, "we do not mean to allow any one to give us the least assistance."

"Louisa," said Caroline, "Alfred has been repeating for mamma, the little prayer that you taught him. How very prettily he says it!"

"Has he?" replied Louisa, slightly colouring; "I only told him that he was to say it in the nursery, every morning and evening."

"Nurse told me this morning," said Caro-

line, "when she brought baby to see me, that 'Master Alfred was so fond of Miss Louisa;' and that Miss Louisa had been teaching him a prayer in verse, which, Nurse said, she was almost sure was 'Miss Louisa's own *compacting*.'"

"It contained nothing, my love, for which you need blush," said Mrs. Langham, as she observed Louisa's deepening colour; "it is a very nice little prayer, if it be not rather beyond his comprehension."

"I do not think it is, mamma," replied Louisa, "when it is explained to him. I taught him in rhyme because I thought he would remember it better;" and then, apparently fancying it necessary to assign some reason for her undertaking, she continued, "I heard him one evening saying his prayers in the nursery before he was put into bed, and he only repeated the Lord's Prayer, without seeming to have any idea of what he was doing; and though of course he ought to know the Lord's Prayer, yet I remember, mamma, when we were little children, you used to teach us other little prayers besides,

which, I think, you made yourself for us; and you taught us about God, and made us understand what it was to pray to him—O, mamma, I can remember now some of the prayers that we used to say with our little hands placed together kneeling by you; and even now, mamma, without thinking of it, I often repeat those very words that you taught when I was a tiny little child.”

“Do you, my love?” said Mrs. Langham, as she involuntarily laid down her work, and her eye rested with affectionate delight on the speaking countenance turned towards hers with an expression of answering fondness.

“Yes, dear mamma; and so I thought,” said Louisa, “that I should like to teach Alfred, only I fancied that he would perhaps both remember and like his prayer better if I were to put it into rhyme for him.”

“I wish,” said Caroline with a sigh, “I wish, Louisa, that I could write verses like you do.”

“And so you could, dear Carry, I suppose, if you were to try,” replied Louisa.

"No, indeed, I could not, for I have tried, and never could write two lines of poetry in my life," said Caroline; "but then, we must remember, you know, Louisa, that you are altogether more clever than I am."

"O Carry, dear, remember how many things you do better than I do, how much better you play for example; I do not think I shall ever learn to play so well as you; and remember what papa said about your last drawing."

"Yes, but then," replied Caroline, those are things which almost any one may acquire by practice; you may play as well as I do, but I shall never be so clever as you. Do not you think, mamma, that Louisa will be a much more clever woman than I shall?"

"It never occurred to me to think at all upon the subject, though I hope that you will both be sensible and well-informed women," said Mrs. Langham; "but the question as you have now proposed it, Caroline, appears to me to be a very silly one. What can it possibly signify, my love, if

Louisa should be, as I hope to see her, a clever woman, whether she would be more or less so than you? Her relative superiority or inferiority can never make the slightest difference in the real value of either of your characters. When the nobleman in the parable ordered the ten servants to whom he had entrusted his property, to be brought before him, it was not that he might find out how much more one servant had gained than another, but that 'he might know how much every man had gained by his trading;' and in our Saviour's other parable to the same effect, we find no comparison instituted between the respective gains of the servants: the same gracious sentence of approbation was pronounced upon him who had gained only two talents, as upon him who had gained five; both were alike considered 'good and faithful servants,' and both were alike invited to 'enter into the joy of their Lord,' because each had improved to the best of his power, that portion of his lord's property committed to his charge, for the use of which he was individually responsible. This you see, my

dear children, is a principle which leaves no room for indolence. We need not waste our time in trying to ascertain how many talents more or less are given to us, than to those around us ; but we must be careful to make the most of what we ourselves possess ; those, even, who have but one talent to employ in the service of their Master, will have need of all their diligence duly to improve that one ; and they who are entrusted with more, far from finding in their possession any cause for self-gratulation, will, indeed, have need of their most diligent exertion to improve to the very utmost their larger stores, and may well read with trembling anxiety their Master's caution, ' to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.' "

" And remember, my dear girls," said Miss Howard, when Mrs. Langham had ceased speaking, " that the mere desire of excelling another is always a poor, at all events, if not a bad motive to act from, because our end is equally attained, whether we raise ourselves or lower our competitors ; and as the one is sometimes easy, when the other is difficult,

or perhaps impossible, it is a strong temptation to our nature, which, if once yielded to, even in wish only, will destroy like a worm at the root, all that is excellent in the character, or noble, or lovely, and paralyze every source of honourable exertion, every effort at self-improvement. You think I exaggerate, my love," continued she, addressing Caroline; "but had you witnessed, as I have done at the school where I was in part educated, its baneful effects upon minds not strongly fortified by Christian principle, you would guard, my dear Caroline, as watchfully as I do, against its entrance into your heart."

A servant at this moment entered the room, saying that John Smith's little grand-daughter had come up from the village, to inquire how Miss Langham was.

"O tell him, Martha," exclaimed Caroline, "that I am very well, and that when I am able to walk so far, one of my first journeys shall be to come and see him."

"And Martha," said Mrs. Langham, "let the poor little child have a cup of new milk

and a piece of bread and butter, I dare say she will be glad of it after her walk."

"O mamma," exclaimed Caroline as the servant left the room, "how much easier my leg has been for me to bear, than that poor old man's was for him, surrounded as I have been by such dear, kind friends, with every possible alleviation of my pain, and every thing that I could want or wish."

"Yet he never murmured," said Louisa, "only he seemed to be distressed on account of his poor wife and his grand-children, and thinking what would become of them while he was unable to work."

"I am sorry to find," observed Miss Howard, "that the poor old man has not now constant employment. It appears that he was engaged in what is called, I think, piece-work, when he fell from the scaffolding. I do not quite understand the terms they use, but what I mean is, that his master was bound by contract to finish the house he was building by a certain specified time; and that some of the workmen were employed upon similar conditions, of whom poor Smith was one:

and as under these circumstances Mr. Horton was obliged to have his work done, he was, of course, compelled to engage another man in Smith's place. He goes there however, now, as often as his master can find him employment; but he cannot supply him with constant work."

"Poor man," said Mrs. Langham, "he has some difficulty, I fear, to obtain a livelihood for his family. Do you know, my dear Miss Howard, whether they are in any distress?"

"I do not think," replied Miss Howard, "that they are at present in actual want; for during the harvest there has been but little difficulty in obtaining work, and Mrs. Smith, I find, takes in a little washing. But it occurred to me yesterday, that when I was visiting in Kent last summer, I frequently saw children carrying about in baskets a number of little nosegays, which they sold for a penny each; and I was thinking that if little Mary could procure some flowers once or twice a week, tied prettily together, to carry into the town, those persons who have no gardens of

their own would gladly buy them from her ; and though she might gain but little, yet that little would be a help to the support of the family."

" O, dear Miss Howard," exclaimed Caroline, " what a very nice thing ! I am so glad you thought of it ; Louisa, will you tell her to come again to-morrow morning ! I know there must be many flowers in my garden that may all be gathered for her."

" Not yet, my love," said Mrs. Langham, as Louisa rose to leave the room, " we must think about it first, and hear what papa says to our proposal, though it seems to me a very good one : and I think I know a little girl who now wishes, that instead of giving way to impatience and discontent, because her flowers were not exactly what she expected them to be, she had continued to cultivate her garden, that she, too, might have had some flowers to offer to poor little Mary."

" I do not wish to draw comparisons between you : Louisa is sometimes right and Caroline wrong ; we are all wrong sometimes, but in this case we must allow that Caroline

acted more wisely, when, instead of exclaiming, "Really it is of no use for me to do anything to my garden; I never have any flowers, and the dogs trample all over it, so that I cannot keep it neat; I declare I will not take any more trouble with it,"—instead of these impatient exclamations, she went to William, and civilly requested him to keep the dogs out of the garden, which, as soon as he was aware of the mischief they had done, he took care to do."

"Yes, mamma," said Louisa, "but it was really very provoking; because it was not only the dogs, but one day, when I had sowed three shillings' worth of seeds, which I bought with my own money, and some of them were just beginning to spring up, when I went into the garden after breakfast, I found that three of the chickens had got in and scratched them nearly all up, and those that were left the snails ate; and it was then, mamma, that I said I would not have a garden of my own to take care of."

"It was a little trying to the temper, perhaps," replied Mrs. Langham, "partieu-

larly to a little girl who has been hitherto so happily circumstanced, that she has yet to learn what a real trial is; but, my dear Louisa, do you mean to act upon this principle as you go on through life? Do you intend to give up every undertaking as soon as a cloud arises to dim your prospect of success? I fear, if this be the case, you will complete but few of them; an apparent failure ought rather to arouse our energies, and excite us to ascertain the cause of our want of success, that we may not again commit the same fault; and thus we may learn wisdom from our errors. If you had looked around you, you would have seen that one of the squares in the green trellis-work was broken, and that the chickens had crept into the garden through the aperture, which I immediately ordered to be repaired: and then, had you carried your observations a little farther, you would have perceived that your sweet-peas were sown too near to the surface; some of them were even partially uncovered, and it was for these that the poor chickens were scratching upon your flower-bed. And as for the snails, I have no

doubt that if you had applied to the gardener, he would have found some method to preserve your seedlings from their devastations."

"I was very silly," said Louisa, "and indeed this is not the first time that I have thought so; for while dear Carry has been ill, I have wished so much that I had some flowers of my own to bring her, because, though you have been so kind, mamma, in allowing me to gather yours, yet still it was not quite so pleasant to me as it would have been, if they had been my very own, from my own little garden; but you know it is never too late to improve, and so, dear mamma, I will try now to learn wisdom from my errors, and you shall see how nice my garden shall look next year."

"Wisely resolved, my love," replied Mrs. Langham, "though you must remember that we cannot speak with certainty of anything that we shall see next year; but do not content yourself, my dear Louisa, with merely checking the outward manifestations of the evil—look to the principle, my love, and

strive to become in every thing more patient and persevering; then, indeed, your uncultivated garden will have taught you a useful lesson.

“I must, however, do you the justice to add, that had you thought it probable that the cultivation of your garden would have placed within your reach a means of increasing the happiness of others, I do think it would not have been quite so readily relinquished.”

“Thank you, dear, dear mamma, for that kind thought,” exclaimed Louisa, “and indeed I will try to be more patient and persevering, and you shall not see so many drawings half finished because they were spoiled, and pieces of music half learned because they contained difficult passages. I cannot shave half my face,” she added, with a smile, “as Demosthenes did; but I shall have a still stronger motive to perseverance, in trying to please my own dear kind mamma.”

“And Louisa, dear,” said Caroline, “you know you will have all my flowers, because it will be some weeks yet before I am able to go out.”

“No, indeed, Carry; but I will tell you what I will do, if mamma will let me; I will gather them in my reticule basket, and bring them up to you to make into little bouquets. We will not make the least litter, mamma, if you will allow us to do so,” said Louisa; “because I will bring up a little tray with me to put the flowers on; and now that Caroline is able to be propped up with these pillows, she can tie up the little nosegays, and it will be a nice amusement for her.” “We can both do them,” interrupted Caroline. “I have no objection, my dear children, to your having them up here,” said Mrs. Langham, “provided that you take care to keep them upon the tray, and not to leave any stalks or dead leaves lying about.”

“Thank you, mamma, that will be very nice,” said Caroline. “O Louisa, I wish you would go and see what flowers there are, that we may think how to place them.”

“That I will,” replied Louisa, “for I have not seen them for the last two days;” and, throwing down her work, she left the room,

and tripped lightly down the stairs into the garden.

“O Carry,” she exclaimed, as she returned, “they are nicer even than I expected; your last new piecotees are out, that papa gave you, and one or two of your deep-red clove carnations, and there are French marigolds and coreopsis, and the nemophilla is not quite out of blossom; then there are two beautiful roots of Indian pink, and some scarlet zinnia and hibiscus, and plenty of mignonette—O, and two or three other things—we can make some capital nosegays, why, I should think a dozen nearly—and, mamma, there are still a few blossoms of white jessamine on the very topmost branches, that William could reach with a ladder, if he might get them for us.”

“You may ask him to do so,” said Mrs. Langham; and I saw yesterday in the green-house some late geraniums, which I think I can spare to increase your store.”

“O thank you, mamma!” they both exclaimed, “you are so very good to us”—

“and I know,” said Louisa, “whose sleeve I shall try to creep up next.”

“I shall be obliged to put another button upon mine, to fasten them tightly round the wrist,” said Miss Howard, “or I foresee I shall have a walk to the village this evening.”

“Oh! you will not have time to do that before evening,” replied Louisa, “for I know the bell will ring in five minutes for us to get ready for dinner; and you do not know,” she added, throwing her arms round Miss Howard’s neck, “you do not half know yet what a clever little coxer I am.”

“I know one thing,” said Miss Howard, smiling, “that uncle Maxwell’s slipper does not stand much chance of being finished to-day, as I heard this morning it was to be.”

“Oh! but it shall,” replied Louisa, taking up her work, “you know I shall have half an hour after dinner, and I shall work hard then; there is not much to do, so I think I can finish it; but if not, I must get up half an hour earlier in the morning, for I *must*

begin the other to-morrow: you know, we have the shirt to make before we go to see them at Christmas. Oh dear! how provoking! I declare, that is the quarter-bell. Well, I suppose we must go, or I shall keep Martha waiting. So good-bye Carry," she added, kissing her sister, "I shall not come to see you after dinner, because you make me idle."

THE BIRTHDAY.

IT was a happy day for Caroline Langham, when her kind papa, assisted by Louisa, first carried her down stairs, and gently laid her on the sofa in the library. On that day she had completed her fourteenth year, and seldom, surely, had any little girl entered upon a new epoch in her life under happier circumstances. More than a month had now elapsed since the day when she fell from the swing, and broke her leg—a month, which she often afterwards declared, was one of the happiest of her short life. Mrs. Langham had become very anxious to have her brought down stairs, as she feared that the long confinement to her bed might affect her general health; for, though she complained of no

pain, yet she was thin, and pale; and a mother's anxious eye fancied she had detected symptoms of debility and exhaustion, even greater than might naturally have been expected to result from the weariness occasioned by remaining for so long a time in one position, and the loss of appetite almost necessarily accompanying the long confinement and want of exercise, to a young healthy girl, accustomed to so much activity. It will, therefore be readily imagined with how much satisfaction the anxious mother had listened to Mr. Graham's decision, that "Miss Langham might safely be removed to the sofa in the library, provided that she were carefully carried down stairs, and her leg kept perfectly still;" and the tear of grateful affection for a moment dimmed Caroline's eye, as she exclaimed,

"O, thank you, dear papa! you have carried me so nicely." And surely, with not less fervent gratitude, did Dr. Langham thank the Giver of all good, that thus, to the completion of her fourteenth year, his child had been preserved to him; while he

fondly kissed her pale cheek, and congratulated her on the auspicious return of that eventful day which had given her life and being; and then, placing on her young head his folded hands, he fervently pronounced a father's blessing on his first-born child.

“I thought I should have been sorry to leave your little room, mamma,” said Caroline, “where I have been so happy; but yet it is very nice to be down here again, in the midst of you all. While I have been upstairs, I have often thought of the account we read in ‘Domestic Portraiture’ of poor Wilberforce Richmond, and of his looking up in his papa’s face, as he stood by his bedside, and telling him, that when he was too ill to think of any thing else, he could always thank God for giving him such a kind papa; I think that would be the case with me, only I should not know where to stop; there would be papa, mamma, Louisa, and poor dear Edward, and Miss Howard; I have such a list of treasures.—And Louisa, you are to have holiday all the day—how very delightful it will be!”

“I wonder,” said Mrs. Langham, “that we have not a letter from Edward by this morning’s post; I told him, when I wrote, that Mr. Graham hoped his sister would be well enough to be carried down stairs upon her birthday. Poor little fellow! how much he would like to be with us! however, the holidays will not be very long; but I confess I never felt more inclined to do a foolish thing, than I did to beg a week’s holiday for him now.”

“I felt strongly disposed to do so myself,” said Dr. Langham; “but it would have been, as you say, my love, a foolish thing; for it is not merely the loss of the time during which children are kept at home that constitutes the evil of too frequent visits, but the unsettled state of mind which they cause, both before and after they are paid. It is, I think, a very mistaken notion, that frequent visits home increase the happiness of boys; and it is very certain that they are a sad interruption to their studies.”

“I quite agree with you, my dear,” replied Mrs. Langham; “and when once I had

determined upon sending a child to school, I should resolutely keep him there until the regularly permitted holidays arrived; though I do not know what you would have said to the plan, Caroline, if Miss Howard had left us."

"But, mamma, you did not think of sending *us* to school!" exclaimed Louisa; "O dear, I hope not! indeed, I think we are, as Emily says, the wrong sort of children to go to school"—

— "After being so spoiled at home," continued Mrs. Langham, with a smile.

"No, not spoiled, mamma, only indulged," interrupted Louisa; "no one can say you spoil us, because neither you nor Miss Howard ever allow us to do what is wrong, or to neglect the performance of any of our duties; but I think we *are* rather indulged."

"A little, I think," said Mrs. Langham; "then I must call it indulged; but, however, you need not alarm yourself, for I have at present no intention of sending you to school, though I should have been strongly inclined to decide upon that step when we thought of

losing Miss Howard, could I have heard of one which more nearly corresponded with my wishes; for in my then delicate state of health, it appeared both to your papa and myself to be the wisest plan."

"But, dear mamma," said Louisa, as she drew her little stool closer to her, "you are so much better now than you were then; and Miss Howard is going to stay with us, and it is all done with,—so let us talk about something else, mamma, for I do not like to *hear* about our going to school."

"Suppose, then, you fetch your work," said Mrs. Langham, "and think of a more agreeable subject for us by the time you return. I suppose your papa has taken refuge in his study," she added, as on looking round when Louisa left the room, she perceived that Dr. Langham had also quitted it.

"I remember, Caroline," said Mrs. Langham after a moment's pause, "I remember, when I was a little girl like you, on the day on which I completed my fourteenth year, my own dear and honoured mother invited me, after breakfast was finished, into her

dressing-room; when, after reminding me that I was now arrived at that period of life when the follies of very early childhood should give way to the more rational employments of maturer years; and when some of the time, hitherto spent in childish amusement, should be devoted to the pursuit of those studies which enable a woman to fill with propriety that important station which Providence has assigned her in society,—she concluded by presenting me with a small Polyglot Bible; and, even now,” added Mrs. Langham, as her voice deepened with emotion, while the unbidden tear rose to her eye—the fond tribute of the heart’s memory to her venerated parent—“even now, I seem to catch the mild beam of her soft blue eye, and could almost fancy myself listening to the silvery tones of her gentle voice, when, placing it in my hand, as I stood before her, she spoke to me of the inestimable value of the treasure she bestowed; ‘Make it, my Emily, your constant companion, and let its principles be the basis, its precepts the guide of your every action; you are no longer, my

love, a mere child, but a rational, and therefore an accountable being; and when a few more years are passed over your head, if you are spared to enjoy them, you will be called upon to act your destined part on life's great stage. Ere that time arrives, my Emily, you may have lost the guide to whom you are now accustomed to look for direction in every little difficulty; the friend in whose unchanging affection you now find a refuge in every sorrow. I trust that God may decree otherwise, my love, for it is but seldom that any earthly friend can supply a mother's place; but because I feel this, my dear child, I am the more anxious that you should secure a Heavenly one. Friends may deceive you, Emily. The counsels of the wisest and the best of human beings may lead you astray—but the Omniscient Jehovah can never err. This book contains the counsels of Infinite Wisdom, embodied, if I may so speak, and rendered visible to mortal man: reverence them as such; they will guide you in every emergency; and pray that the same Holy Spirit, which dictated its sacred precepts,

may impress them, my Emily, upon your heart.' On that day twelvemonths, my dear Caroline, my beloved mother had been one week consigned to the silent tomb; her 'end was,' indeed, most emphatically, 'peace;' and well do I remember my dear father's exclamation, as he gazed with tearful eyes upon the pallid countenance, where the smile of an angel seemed to linger round the half-closed lips, and gave rather the idea of a blissful dream, than the sleep of death. 'We can hardly call this, my children,' said he, 'the triumph of sin, it is so strikingly the triumph of grace.' A sorrowful birthday, however, was that to me, and mournful indeed were my thoughts, as they turned backward, and I felt the change that one short year had made; but I trust, I endeavoured to hide the bitterness of my own grief, that I might in some measure alleviate that of my dear father, who for many years was spared to us; and precious, as you may imagine, was then my mother's gift. Since the day when I received it from her dear hand, it has been my constant companion,

and in every sorrow I have found it the only true, the never-failing source of comfort.

“I now present it to you, my love,” added Mrs. Langham, as she drew from the table beside her a sealed packet, which she placed in Caroline’s hand. “I can only repeat my own sainted mother’s words to my eldest child; who will well believe I am now bestowing on her my most precious earthly treasure; and O, my dear Carry, I can only pray, that it may be to you, what it has been to me.”

A silence of some minutes followed, for the hearts of both mother and child were full; but it was at length broken by Louisa’s elastic step, as she entered the room exclaiming, “O mamma, Miss Howard has indeed found us a pleasant subject!” but she paused as her mamma looked up, and she saw the traces of tears upon her countenance; Caroline’s eyes, too, were dimmed, and Louisa looked wonderingly from one to the other, until her mamma inquired, “What is this pleasant subject, Louisa, that Miss Howard has found for our discussion?”

“O mamma, I will tell you,—when I went

up stairs for my work, I found that one of my balls of wool was missing, which I remembered that Miss Howard had taken care of for me ; so I tapped at her room-door, to ask her for it, and when I had found my ball, I told her that we wanted her down stairs to keep mamma from talking about our going to school ; so she said she was just then coming down, and intended to ask mamma about us, and about school too. There, Carry ! and yet I told you that the subject she had found was a *pleasant* one,—so I shall leave you to puzzle out how that can be, for I have promised to take Miss Howard this sheet of paper, and some string, which I must get from Martha, I suppose ;” and she lightly tripped away from the room.

Not many minutes elapsed before Louisa again made her appearance, accompanied by Miss Howard, the latter carrying with her a small parcel addressed to “Miss Langham,” which she placed in Caroline’s hand. It contained a neatly bound edition of Miss Jewsbury’s “Letters to the Young,” in which Caroline’s name was written ; and her kind

governess begged her to accept the little volume, as a remembrance of her fourteenth birthday. She had scarcely finished expressing her thanks, when a servant entered the library with two parcels, both of which were directed to "Miss Langham;" and had arrived that morning by the same coach.

"Dear mamma," said Caroline, as she turned them over, and tried in vain to recognise the handwriting, "wherever can these have come from?"

"I think," replied Mrs. Langham, with a smile, "that the best way of ascertaining that fact will be to open them, for they are directed plainly enough to Miss Langham, Langham Priory, so that there is no danger of your appropriating any other person's property."

"O yes, Carry!" exclaimed Louisa, "let us see what they are, here is a pair of scissors to cut the string!—let us open this large one first."

"Two beautiful workboxes!" exclaimed Caroline, "who can have sent us these?—O, here is a note!—why, aunt Maxwell,

for this is certainly her writing: how very kind of her! and, mamma, here is a letter for you too!”

Mrs. Langham's letter was from the Colonel, and informed her of their safe arrival in Devonshire, all in good health. Caroline's note was from her aunt, who, after congratulating her upon the return of the anniversary of her birthday, concluded by telling her, that, as the Colonel thought it would be hardly fair to expect his work to be done without furnishing them with the materials for it, he had purchased two rosewood workboxes, of which he begged their acceptance, and which she had had much pleasure in furnishing for her two nieces, and hoped they would find nothing omitted.

“How very kind of aunt and uncle!” they both exclaimed, as they opened their respective presents. “O mamma, look what nice ones they are! and I am sure aunt has furnished them beautifully for us;—scissors, bodkin, thimble, penknife, and, look mamma, they all match so nicely; O do look! all pearl and silver! plenty of pins, needles,

cotton, all sorts of things: no, indeed, aunt Maxwell, there does not appear to have been anything forgotten."

With great delight the children continued to examine their possessions, until Caroline recollected that she had still another parcel.

"I cannot imagine who has sent this," said she, as she proceeded to examine its contents,— "why, Teddy! for this is his writing, I am certain," and she eagerly broke the seal of the note which first met her eye.

"O poor Edward!" said Louisa, "I never thought of its coming from him."

"Yes, indeed, it is!" exclaimed Caroline, as she unfolded her note.

"Dear Carry,—It gave me great pleasure to hear from mamma that you were to come down stairs to-day. I hope nothing has happened to disappoint you, and wish you many happy returns of the day. How very much I should like to be with you"—poor fellow, I dare say he would!—"but I know papa does not like me to come home in the middle of the half-year, so I would not write to ask

him. I was very anxious to get you some little token of remembrance to send you on your birthday, but could not think of anything, until I recollected that when you were netting my purse, I heard you wish very much for a netting-case, so I hope you will like this. Please to give my best love to papa and mamma, and Louisa, and believe me, dear Caroline, your affectionate brother,

“EDWARD LANGHAM.”

“Is not it a nice little note, mamma?” said Caroline, as she finished reading it aloud, “and how much he is improved in his writing! I think, Louisa, he writes very nearly as well as you.”

“Quite, I think,” replied Louisa, “and how kind of him to remember your birthday! I think it is very nice to remember birthdays, mamma!”

“As this has been remembered, my love,” replied Mrs. Langham, “I do not at all like the idea of turning into occasions of festivity these milestones, if I may so call them, of our journey through life, which might be

much more profitably employed as we pass by them."

"O mamma!" exclaimed Louisa, "I think that is a very appropriate term for them. Persons generally, you know, when they pass a milestone, look to see whether they are in the right way, especially if they are at all in doubt about it. Then, if they see on it the name of the place to which they wish to go, they want to know how far they have yet to travel; and if it will not tell them that, they know at least how far they have come, and therefore can form some judgment of what remains: and I know, mamma, for you have often told us, that these are the uses which we should make of birthdays."

"Yes, my love," replied Mrs. Langham, "even you, young as you are, may gain much benefit from a frequent retrospect of the years that are gone, and from the past may learn wisdom for the future. You remember, I dare say, those remarkable words in the fifteenth verse of the third chapter of Ecclesiastes, "God requireth that which is past." And you know that he commanded the

children of Israel, to ‘remember all the way by which the Lord their God had led them, for forty years, in the wilderness, to humble them, and to prove them, to know what was in their hearts, whether they would serve the Lord their God, or no.’ It is very useful occasionally to ask ourselves, how these ends of God’s providential dealings with us have been answered; and perhaps there is no time more suitable for such reflections, than the annual return of a birthday. Another of the threescore years and ten allotted to man upon earth has been then completed, each one rolling by more quickly than its predecessor,—each gone to tell its tale of good or evil at the throne of God, and to take its station among the imperishable records of Eternity,—till that great day, when all that is past shall again be present to us, and the account of every past hour shall be strictly required.”

“There is, I think, no part of the imagery of holy Scripture more beautiful and consoling, than that which represents the throne of Omnipotent Justice as surrounded by the

emblem of mercy and love. ‘And there was a rainbow round about the throne.’ Feeling, as the very best of us must feel, how much, notwithstanding all our endeavours, we daily, and hourly, fall short of the requirements of God’s perfect law; how would our birthdays appear to us, but as seasons of grief and fear, were there no Holy Spirit to sanctify, no precious Saviour to redeem with his atoning blood, no rainbow round about the throne of God.”

“But I would not weary my dear children,” continued Mrs. Langham, “though I am, indeed, anxious to lose no opportunity of impressing upon their young minds the sacred truths of our holy religion; and I quite agree with Louisa, that it is very pleasant to be remembered by those whom we love. I am particularly pleased with Edward’s kind thoughtfulness of his sister, and shall certainly encourage him to continue the practice he has begun, of remembering, at least by a letter, the birthdays of his home circle when he is absent from them.”

“Yes, mamma!” exclaimed both the

children eagerly, "and we will write to him on his birthday."

"I should like you to do so, my dears," replied Mrs. Langham.

"From the time that I was twelve years of age, your uncle Maxwell and I have never passed by a birthday unobserved; and though I do not think that our affection for each other needed any additional strengthening, yet we cannot tell how much this, at least, annual interchange of kind thoughts and feelings, may have contributed to keep alive that warm affection which brothers and sisters too often suffer to decay, as, one by one, they settle in life, and form separate circles, and separate interests of their own."

"I heard Mrs. Ashton say," observed Caroline, "that she did not like to keep birthdays, because, if anything happened to the person whose birthday one had been accustomed to keep, it made the recurrence of the day afterwards so very painful."

"It might be so, my love," replied Mrs. Langham, "yet I think the risk of such an evil would hardly be a sufficient reason for

giving up the advantages of this pleasing custom; and indeed, to a Christian family, who hope to meet again in heaven, the annual recurrence of the day would but bring the thought, that he who used to make one of their changing circle on earth, was 'gone before,' to join the unchanging circle of the happy spirits made perfect in heaven; and that though 'he would not return to them, yet that they should go to him.' It would, no doubt, bring home to the heart with double force the remembrance of their loss, for religion does not eradicate or blunt the natural feelings, though it subdues and soothes them; but, comforted by such a hope, it would not be an unbearable grief: they would rather say with Keeble, in his beautiful lines on the Burial of the Dead,—

' 'Tis sweet, as year by year we lose
Friends out of sight, in faith to muse
How grows in Paradise our store.'

I once knew an excellent old lady," continued Mrs. Langham, "the mother of a large family of fourteen children, nine of whom survived her, who always kept the

birthday of every child ; and in after years, when they became fathers and mothers in their turns, the custom was still continued between the brothers and sisters, and formed a band of union which it was delightful to find still subsisting among the members of a family, after they had ceased to form one household. She was a widow for many years, and at the time I first knew her, had only two unmarried daughters remaining with her ; but, on her own birthday, it was the constant custom of all her children, if possible, to spend it with her ; and if circumstances deprived them of that pleasure, she always received from them some proof of their remembrance and filial affection ; though it was frequently the case, that every member of her family was thus assembled under the maternal roof. I recollect once spending a week with one of the married daughters of this happy family, and had the pleasure of witnessing one of these reunions ; all were present except the eldest daughter, and the second son, who was then unmarried. In the morning, I remember, a letter arrived

from the daughter, explaining that the sudden and rather serious illness of her husband detained her at home, but full of affectionate wishes for her mother's happiness, and begging her acceptance of a reclining chair, which she said would arrive in the course of the day, the joint present of herself and her husband, who most warmly united with her in the hope that it would, in some measure, add to the comfort of their dear mother's declining years. Dinner was announced at an early hour, and Mrs. Seymour remarked that it was the first time she had ever passed a birthday without seeing or hearing from all her dear children; but as Edward, she said, was then in Italy, if not, indeed, on his way home, she could not expect that he should be able to send her his accustomed letter; though she knew the happy assembled group were present to his thoughts that day, wherever he might be. Two little girls, the children of Captain Seymour, the eldest son, had accompanied their papa and mamma; and when they were brought into the dining-room, to participate of the dessert,

were eagerly describing to their grandmamma, a man whom they said they had seen in the hall, with a large cloak and a very funny cap, made of brown fur, like their mamma's muff, when the room door was thrown open, and Mr. Edward Seymour was announced; a fine-looking, handsome young man, who declared that he had travelled with the speed of an express, to reach his mother on her birthday."

"O dear, mamma, how very nice of him!" exclaimed Louisa, "how very glad his mother must have been to see him!"

"She was, indeed," replied Mrs. Langham; "and, altogether, I scarcely ever remember passing a happier day than that which was spent with this pleasant family."

The sound of carriage wheels, as Mrs. Langham concluded her story, was heard approaching the hall-door; and a servant soon after entered the room, announcing Mrs. and Miss Ashton.

"Show them into the library, William," Mrs. Langham replied.

"I consider my time to-day as your

property, Caroline," she continued, turning to her daughter, "and must not see any company whom I cannot entertain here."

Mrs. and Miss Ashton were now introduced into the library; the former, a pleasant-looking lady of about five-and-forty years of age; the latter, a pretty simple-looking girl of eighteen. They both saluted Caroline with great kindness, and congratulated her on being well enough to be brought down stairs again; and, after a visit of half an hour, took their leave, Mrs. Ashton having obtained a promise from Mrs. Langham, that as soon as Caroline was sufficiently recovered to leave home, the children should spend a long day with them.

"Indeed, mamma!" exclaimed Caroline, when they were gone, "I shall very much enjoy spending a day there; for their gardens are so beautiful, and Mrs. and Miss Ashton are always so exceedingly kind, and take so much pains to amuse us."

"They are, indeed," replied Louisa, "and Miss Ashton is very amiable, and very sensible too, mamma. I do like her, she is so

simple and unaffected ;—but, Carry, I really was quite in trouble for you, when Mrs. Ashton said her corn was a good thermometer.”

“What was that?” inquired Mrs. Langham; “I did not hear any such observation.”

“No, mamma, you and Miss Howard were talking to Miss Ashton,” replied Caroline.

“O mamma,” said Louisa, “I know that it was quite an accidental mistake; I could not think for a moment that Mrs. Ashton did not know the difference between a barometer and a thermometer; but she said she thought that we should have some rain soon; and, among other signs foretelling it, she told Caroline that she had a corn which was always very troublesome at the approach of wet weather, and which was really, she said, ‘a very good thermometer.’ So Carry said, in reply, after a little bungling about it, that she had often heard persons speak of their foretelling the weather.”

“O because,” interrupted Caroline, “I was going to say that I had often heard of their acting as barometers, but I thought it

would seem as though I used the word on purpose to show that I had perceived her mistake: that was the reason why I stopped, mamma, and hesitated."

"Certainly, my love," replied Mrs. Langham, "it would have appeared so, and, from a little girl like you, to a person so much older, it would not have been at all becoming. Had Miss Ashton made such an observation to me, the relative positions would have been reversed, and, as a friend, I should purposely have pointed out the error; but, as you say, Louisa," continued Mrs. Langham, "I feel quite sure that that must have been an accidental blunder; and if Mrs. Ashton has not enjoyed those advantages of early education which some of our friends have possessed, we must not blame her for not obtaining what was never placed within her reach. For my own part, I can truly say that there are few of my friends whom I esteem more highly than Mrs. Ashton. If her intellectual powers are less cultivated than they might have been under more favourable circumstances, the far more important

culture of the heart has not been neglected; and she possesses, with her naturally good sense, a high degree of that sterling excellence of character, and benevolence of feeling, in consideration of which we may well dispense with the display of very brilliant talents."

"And yet, mamma," said Louisa, "really it is rather puzzling sometimes to know what to say. A little while ago, before aunt and uncle Maxwell left us, uncle Maxwell and Mr. Hodson, you know, were talking together upon some political subject, and you sent me to give your compliments to uncle Maxwell, and to tell him that he ought to have finished that discussion in the dining-room;—just as I went up to them, Mr. Hodson was saying, that 'patriotism is a much more rare virtue in these days, than it was in ancient times;' I was standing by, waiting until he had done talking, that I might deliver your message to uncle Maxwell, at which Mr. Hodson laughed; and then he turned round to me, and said, 'Ah, Miss Louisa, I question whether, if a gulf were now to open in our forum, we should

find any one willing to jump into it, as Marcus Manlius did."

"Marcus Curtius," said Caroline, "not Marcus Manlius."

"To be sure," rejoined Louisa, "and I suppose I looked a little surprised, for he asked me if I did not recollect reading, in the History of Rome, that a gulf once opened in the midst of the forum, which it was said would never close until the most precious things in Rome were thrown into it?"

"I told him that I perfectly recollected the story, for that I had read it lately; and then he asked me if I did not remember that Marcus Manlius leaped in, with his horse and armour, declaring that nothing was more valuable than courage and patriotism?"

"I could not say, you know, mamma, that I remembered that, because I knew that it was Marcus Curtius who did so; so I said, 'No, I did not recollect it;' and he patted my head, and told me I must read my Roman history over again; and then I was going away, yet I did not feel myself quite right, it seemed as though I had been hardly honest,

and I could not help thinking that it would have been better to say to him, that I thought it was Marcus Curtius. However, uncle Maxwell helped me out of my difficulty; for he asked him if he were not confusing his recollections of Marcus Manlius with those of Marcus Curtius? and then he said directly, ‘O yes, to be sure, I am; yes, it was Marcus Manlius who was thrown from the Tarpeian rock.’”

“It would indeed, my love, have been inexcusable for *you* to have forgotten it,” said Mrs. Langham; “while the Roman history is at present forming a part of your constant studies; though it was very possible that Mr. Hodson might, for the moment, have confused the names of two certainly very different characters.”

“Yes, mamma,” replied Louisa, “and I know that Mr. Hodson is so very well informed upon every subject, that I should, of course, have thought at once that I must be mistaken, if I had not read it so very lately.”

“We generally find,” observed Mrs. Langham, “that those who are very anxious to

seize upon every occasion of displaying their learning, have but a small stock in their possession, which they are therefore desirous of setting off to the best advantage; and I know few characters more ridiculous than that of a young person, whose knowledge can be at best but limited, and who yet takes every opportunity of pointing out, with a criticizing air, the casually detected errors of others, in order to show her own superior information. I would far rather that you should be universally considered as ignorant little girls, than that I should ever see you pushing yourselves forward to display the little share of knowledge you may happen to possess of any subject: at the same time, my dear Louisa, we must take care lest, in our fear of being suspected of one evil, we actually fall into another; and I agree with you, that though, as a mere listener to the remark, it would have been quite out of your place to notice the error; yet, when directly appealed to by Mr. Hodson, it was, as you say, hardly honest to evade a straightforward reply."

“No, I felt, mamma, that it was not,” replied Louisa, “and I knew that in your opinion, and I suppose that of any other person whose opinion is worth considering at all, no amiability of character can atone for the want of strict integrity.”

“You have well expressed,” replied Mrs. Langham, with an encouraging smile, “a principle, which, if kept constantly in view, you will find, as you grow older, very useful to you in your intercourse with society:—only remember, that the knowledge of what is right, is not, in itself, sufficient to insure the performance of it; and that continual watchfulness, with prayer for strength greater than our own, are both equally necessary, if we would have our principles and practice correspond with each other.—But now I am very anxious to know what Miss Howard can possibly mean by this proposal of which Louisa talks, of your going to school.”

“No, mamma,” interrupted Louisa, “about us and school,—not exactly our ‘going to school.’”

“I alluded,” replied Miss Howard, “to

the Sunday-school; for Caroline has to-day completed her fourteenth year, and Louisa nearly her thirteenth; they are therefore quite old enough, and I hope, when Caroline is able to go out again, may be quite capable, provided that their mamma has no objection to it, of instructing two of the junior classes."

"O delightful!" exclaimed Caroline; "dear Miss Howard! you know that is what we have so long been wishing for."

"It is, I know," replied Miss Howard, "but I feared proposing it, until you appeared to be in some degree sensible of the importance of the undertaking, and of the degree of responsibility which is attached to the office of a Sunday-school teacher; for we do not merely aim at teaching the children to read, but endeavour, while so doing, to instil into the minds of our young charge those principles of piety and virtue which will render them good and useful members of society, as they grow up into womanhood in this life; and, with God's blessing, prepare them for that better and eternal state of being in the world to come, which the atoning blood and

righteousness of Jesus Christ have freely purchased for all who come to him for salvation.

“To teach them this, my dear children, is the high end at which we aim; and before we can have any hope of attaining it, our own minds and hearts must be deeply impressed with those important truths which we would impress upon their’s.”

“I shall be very glad,” said Mrs. Langham, “if my little girls can assist Miss Howard in the performance of a duty which my own uncertain state of health has hitherto compelled me to leave almost entirely to her; yet, I trust, my dear children, that you will not undertake it thoughtlessly, but think seriously, and think prayerfully, before you accept Miss Howard’s proposal, of what she has told you of its importance: consider well before you act; and if you decide that you can conscientiously accept it, I shall indeed be most happy to give you my full and free consent. Remember, if you once undertake the instruction of a class, no slight difficulties must be allowed to prevent you from regularly attending it; for, however strongly

you may sometimes feel inclined to absent yourselves from your young charge, it will then be a point of duty to allow nothing less than absolute necessity to keep you away."

"O mamma!" exclaimed Louisa, "I am quite sure that we shall never wish to stay away, we shall be too fond of going there."

"While it continues to be a novelty," replied Mrs. Langham; "but that charm will soon wear off, and then, perhaps, when the morning is not very inviting, indolence will suggest, that it would be much better to wait for the carriage, and ride to church with mamma, than have to walk; and so, the poor little children who depend upon you for instruction, and who, but for your promised assistance, might have had a more assiduous teacher, will be left to the care of any one who may happen to be there to occupy your vacant place."

"But, mamma," replied Caroline, "I do not think it at all likely that we shall ever get tired. See how long Miss Howard has been there every Sunday, and yet she is not tired of it."

“Yes, my love,” replied Mrs. Langham, “and this is the very point to which I wish to bring you. Miss Howard has not become tired, because she acts upon principle. There have been, doubtless, many occasions, when, had inclination alone been consulted, she would have preferred spending the Sabbath morning in quiet reading at home; but then her high sense of duty interfered, and so led her constantly to the school she had undertaken to superintend. This, my dear children, is the motive from which I should like to see you undertake the instruction of a class; not merely because you think that you shall ‘like it so very much,’ (though I hope and believe you will find much pleasure in it,) but because you feel that it is the *bounden* duty of you, who enjoy so many privileges of religious instruction at home, to extend the benefit, as far as you can, to those who, by their circumstances and station in life, are deprived of some of those advantages which you possess in so large a measure.”

“We will try, dear mamma,” replied Louisa, “to look upon it in this light.”

“And, indeed,” added Caroline, “we must be ungrateful not to feel the many, very many blessings and privileges which we enjoy.”

“Another point of great importance,” said Mrs. Langham, “and one which will require the exercise of some self-denial, is punctuality. You know the school commences at nine o’clock, and the walk will occupy at least a quarter of an hour; so that you must have breakfasted, and be quite ready to set out at a quarter before nine. In order to accomplish this, what you have been accustomed from the beginning of this year to do on Sunday morning, must now be prepared on Saturday evening; and even then, you must rise early to be quite ready in time. If your scholars find that *you* are not punctual, depend upon it *they* will very soon cease to be so; and the whole school will be thrown into confusion by the late attendance of the Miss Langhams’ classes.”

“O mamma, we will take care always to be in time!” was the ready reply of both the children; “and as for our Sunday morning’s collect, with its scripture references,” added

Louisa, "we can easily prepare that, by a little diligent application on the Saturday evening, during our holiday."

"Well, my dear little girls!" replied Mrs. Langham; "I can only tell you, that if, after careful consideration of the subject, you decide upon commencing the undertaking, I shall indeed be delighted—only remember, that once begun it *must* be diligently carried on."

"O yes, mamma, indeed it shall," replied Louisa. "I know, dearest mamma," she added, looking affectionately in her face; "I know that it is of me you are most fearful; but I do hope that, in this instance at least, you will not have to complain of my want of perseverance; though, for my own part, I can hardly at present imagine it possible that I can ever be tired, I found so much pleasure in teaching little Alfred, when he was here, and he became so fond of me, —dear little fellow!—it was quite a grief for me to part with him."

"But, my dear Louisa," replied Miss Howard, "you must not deceive yourself

with the expectation of finding all your class of children like Alfred, the instruction of whom was in itself a pleasure."

"No, certainly," replied Louisa, "it would be too much to hope that all should be like him."

"Perhaps, none," rejoined Miss Howard; "when you consider the homes from which the greater number of those children will have come to you, the parents by whom they have been brought up, the examples which are daily before their eyes, the little instruction which you can impart to them on the sabbath-day, to some perhaps, counteracted before the sabbath is ended, by the irreligion of their own firesides, where the name of God, it may be, is never heard, except to accompany the angry blow, and call down the vengeance of Heaven upon every accidental transgression of possibly even a drunken parent's will;—we can hardly expect to find them ready at once to practise virtues which they have never been taught, nor hope to overcome at once those vices which, in many cases, have grown unchecked,

in some have been even fostered, from their earliest infancy:—little hope, indeed, could we have of *ever* overcoming these evils by our little efforts, when we consider the powerful influences against which we are contending, but for the promise of the Omnipotent, that his blessing shall accompany those efforts; and what can we say, when, instead of being aided by, at least a parent's prayers, a father's most fearful imprecations invoke evil upon his own offspring? And yet, the worse the state in which we find them, the more urgent need there is for the use of our most energetic exertions to rescue them from it; and you must calculate upon meeting with obstinacy and stupidity, inattention and carelessness, and sometimes, (though I think not often,) ingratitude for all your labours; and then, if you have not a higher motive to animate you, when inclination gives way under repeated disappointments, you will give up the undertaking in disgust, where, if you acted upon Christian principle, you would find but additional motive for repeated and more vigorous exertion.

There are, however, some very pleasing examples in our own school of a very different kind; and many such, I trust, will fall to your share."

"O yes!" replied Louisa: "I know there are many very nice little girls in the school: and do you know, mamma," she added, turning to Mrs. Langham, "papa said, the other day, when he called to see the poor old widow Evans, he found Alice Green, one of Miss Howard's scholars, sitting by the bedside reading to her; and the poor old woman told him that Alice had been exceedingly kind to her all the time that she had been ill—coming in every evening, when she returned from school, to make her bed; and, very frequently, before she went in the morning, to sweep up her kitchen for her, and light her fire."

"Yes, my love," replied Mrs. Langham, "your papa was mentioning it to me, and it is very pleasing, and very encouraging, to see such results from Miss Howard's exertions; for, if I mistake not, when Alice was first admitted into the school, she was a very

unpromising girl. But here comes your papa," she added, as the Doctor entered the room; "and with another pareel! Surely, Carry, this cannot be for you!"

It seemed not, for he laid it down without speaking upon the table, and seated himself at the end of the sofa by Caroline's feet.

"And how does my Carry find herself?" he kindly inquired, as he slowly drew his hand, with a thoughtful expression, across his slightly bronzed forehead; "has the leg been at all painful after our journey down stairs?"

"Not at all, dear papa," she replied, while her brightly beaming eye seemed lighted up with affectionate gratitude. "You earried me so very nicely, that I think it eannot have done it any harm."

"I hope not, my love," replied the Doctor; "but what," he added, as he glanced round him; "what may be the meaning of all these packages which I see upon the table?"

"O papa!" exclaimed Louisa, "such a nice letter from Edward!"

"And letters from aunt and uncle Max-

well," added Caroline; "and these are presents sent me on my birthday; is it not very kind of them?"

"Very kind, my love;—and what does my boy say about himself? Is it to you, Carry, that he has written?" inquired her father.

"Yes, papa, you can read the letter yourself," replied Caroline, as she placed it in his hand.

"Poor little fellow!" said the doctor, as he returned the letter to Caroline, "I have no doubt it would have been a great pleasure to him to pay us a visit now; but it is better, much better, as it is; it would only have unsettled him. And the colonel, my love," he continued, addressing Mrs. Langham, "and Mrs. Maxwell, and the children are all well, I hope? had they seen Emily?"

"I conclude not, for my brother does not mention her," replied Mrs. Langham; "but they had a pleasant journey, and were all quite well."

"And look, papa," said Louisa, "at aunt and uncle's nice present to Caroline and me! are not these nice workboxes?"

“Very, my love,” he replied; “and this is the netting-case of which Edward speaks? your friends are very kind to remember you—but that is the half-hour bell for dinner, and I shall need some preparation for it after my walk: so Caroline, my love, I will tell you afterwards what I want to say to you.”

“I had some idea,” said Mrs. Langham, as she followed the doctor through the hall; “I had some idea of our dining to-day in the library, as we are quite alone, for it seems too bad to leave poor Caroline to dine by herself on her birthday; but, upon consideration, I thought it would be better not, for she has already had, perhaps, rather too much excitement.”

“Right, my dear, quite right,” replied the doctor; “I thought, when I came into the room, that her face looked flushed, and there was a brilliancy in her eye which is hardly natural to Caroline; she will rest while we are at dinner, and we can take our dessert with her in the library.”

A quarter of an hour had hardly elapsed before the anxious father was again seated

by the side of his child ; her cheek was somewhat paler than when he left her, and a tear was hastily wiped away as he entered the room.

“ Is there any thing, my love, that makes you unhappy ?” he kindly inquired, as he placed her hand in his.

“ O no, papa ! No, indeed !—and I am sure that no tears should fall to-day, except those of gratitude for the dear kind friends whom God has given me ; and I do hope, my dear papa, that all these things will not be lost upon me, but that the coming year will find me wiser and better than the last.”

“ I hope so, too, my love,” replied her father ; “ and there is one sadly prevailing error of the past year which I wish especially to point out to you ; I mean your impatience of reproof, and your unwillingness ever to acknowledge yourself wrong. I know what you would say, my love ; for nothing softens the character so much as suffering ; and to those who have sympathized with us in our sorrows, we feel, for the time, as though we could never repay the debt of gratitude we owe. Your feelings

are strongly excited ; and I have no doubt it seems to you, at present, quite impossible that you should ever again become the self-willed obstinate girl I have sometimes found you."

" O yes !" exclaimed Caroline ; " it does indeed."

" I know it, my dear child," he replied ; " I hope it may be so ; yet you must not flatter yourself that this besetting sin is conquered, because, for the present, it lies dormant : the last month has afforded it but few opportunities of shewing itself ; and I gladly acknowledge that your patient suffering has endeared you to us all. Yet there is great reason for you still to be upon your guard—for when you are able to resume your usual routine of duties, you will doubtless find yourself still called upon to contend vigorously against that pride of heart which is the source of so much evil in your character."

" I hope, papa," said Caroline, " that my absurd, and worse than *absurd* contention with Miss Howard, will have produced at least one good effect,—that it has shown me

to what fearful lengths this sad obstinacy, if unchecked, may lead me, and how many faults follow in the train of one,—for indeed, papa, I could not have believed before, that it could have carried me so far astray. O, I hope I shall never be so foolish—so wicked—again!—and, as you say, papa, ‘it does at present seem impossible.’”

“I trust you may not, my dear child,” replied the Doctor; “yet we know who it is who has said, ‘Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall;’—and another thing, which may contribute to your self-complacency, is the perhaps somewhat proud consciousness that you are at present a first consideration to every one. This, of course, is not the general position of young persons, nor would it be proper that it should be so; and possibly some of your present amiability of feeling may be traced to this cause.—(I am only, my love, giving you a few hints for the re-examination of your own heart): hitherto you have seen every minor consideration give way to that of your comfort, and all have endeavoured, as much as possible, to alleviate

your sufferings, and to soften the tediousness of your long confinement; you consequently feel yourself suddenly risen into importance, and the sensation is, no doubt, a pleasant one; but you know, my love, that as it may please God to restore you to your accustomed health, this must of course cease; it would neither be just towards others, nor desirable for you, that it should continue so."

"O, no, papa," interrupted Caroline, "I could not expect it; I ought to be very thankful, and I hope I am, for the prospect of returning health; and I am sure I do feel very grateful to you all, for the very great and untiring kindness you have all shown me."

"I am sure you are grateful, my dear child," replied Dr. Langham; "you must remember I am now only throwing out hints for you to improve upon and follow out; for I cannot but feel, nevertheless, that the time may come when you will perhaps fancy yourself a little neglected, and that sort of peevish fretfulness which too often accompanies returning health, may suggest to you that hardly sufficient allowance is made for your not being

quite well ;—do not, my love, for a moment give way to the feeling, but whenever you are tempted to do so, strive resolutely against it, and endeavour to be reasonable, and to see things in their true light and just proportions. I have brought you,” added the Doctor, as he placed in Caroline’s hand the little parcel which he had laid upon the table ; “ I have brought you, Carry, a neat little writing-case, which you will find furnished with writing-paper, pens, and every necessary except ink ; and I can present it to you, my child, with double pleasure on your birthday, as a memorial of the satisfaction which your mamma and I have derived from witnessing the patient submission with which you have borne what has certainly been to you a great trial, but from which, I trust, you have derived many useful lessons.”

“ O, thank you, papa ! ” exclaimed Caroline ; “ how very kind you are ! To receive it as a memorial of my dear papa and mamma’s satisfaction, will indeed render it doubly valuable to me.”

She was proceeding to open her packet,

when Mrs. Langham, accompanied by Louisa and Miss Howard, entered the library. A servant, at that moment, announced that dinner was upon the table, and Louisa begged to remain with Caroline, but her papa thought it better that she should be alone; and the Doctor, offering his arm to Mrs. Langham, Louisa followed with Miss Howard, reminding her mamma of her promise, that William should place the dessert in the library.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

It was on a bright and beautiful morning, in the month of October, that Louisa and Caroline Langham accompanied Miss Howard, for the first time, to the village Sunday-school. Their road lay, for a short distance, down the avenue of old elms which formed the entrance to Langham Priory; and though the brown leaves were thickly scattered on the grass beneath, and rustled with a pleasant sound as the light footsteps of the little girls passed over them, yet sufficient were still remaining on the trees to clothe with beautifully-varied tints the overspreading boughs, whose branches at the top were almost entwined together, and whose graceful forms one cannot but imagine must have suggested that

high pointed arch which we so often see in the remains of our ancient abbeys, particularly those of Norman times, and which is generally pointed out to us as "the great east window," under which the altar stood. The broad shadows of the early morning, before the sun had gained his meridian altitude, had a beautiful effect as they swept over the yet dewy grass; and the universal stillness that reigned around,—a stillness interrupted only by the little feathered songsters warbling forth their matin songs of praise,—was beautifully characteristic of that blessed *sabbath* which it is the high privilege of England so preeminently to enjoy.

The little girls walked gaily onward, one on each side of Miss Howard; Louisa's busy imagination picturing to itself a variety of incidents among her young scholars; Caroline's more reflective mind occupied in considering the nature of the undertaking in which she was about to engage.

"Do, you know, Miss Howard," inquired Louisa, "how many children I shall have in my class?"

“ You will not have more than six at present, my love,” replied Miss Howard, “ for Mr. Robinson intends to give you and Caroline a class between you.”

“ And we are each to have our own six, to teach by ourselves?” said Louisa, in an inquiring tone ; “ not keep the class altogether, and both teach them ?”

“ You may do as you please, my dear children, in that respect,” replied Miss Howard ; “ if it would be more agreeable for you to divide your class into entirely separate parts, it can easily be arranged for you to do so ;— which would Caroline prefer ?”

“ I do not at all mind which,” replied Caroline ; “ so Louisa can do as she likes ; and perhaps it would be better for us each to have our own respective scholars.”

“ I still fear that you will not find it quite so interesting as you expect, Louisa,” said Miss Howard ; “ it is rather tedious to repeat over and over again the same thing, and sometimes very discouraging to find, upon asking a few simple questions at the close of your lesson, how very little progress has been

made ; but we must trust God's own promise, that the seed thus sown shall not be entirely lost ;—the 'bread' thus 'cast upon the waters,' shall not float at random, but, though *we* may not see it, 'shall be found after many days.'

'Dim, or unmark'd, the words may fall,
And yet the heaven-taught mind
May learn the sacred air, and all
The harmony unwind.' "

Dr. Langham had diligently exerted himself, both while he was rector of the parish, and when, on the death of his elder brother, he unexpectedly succeeded to the family estates, to infuse into the minds of all the inhabitants of his parish a deep feeling of reverence for the sabbath-day. He felt that it was a point which human laws, however wisely framed, could never reach ; and endeavoured, both by precept and example, to instil into the minds of his children, his household, all over whom he had any influence, a high sense of the importance of this heaven-appointed season of rest from worldly cares ;—and great success had crowned his efforts, for a sabbath in the village of Lang-

ham was indeed delightful, and our little party, as they entered it, were struck with the quiet serenity which reigned around. There were no groups of idlers loitering about the door of the village alehouse; no children running noisily out of the village shop, in eager enjoyment of the purchase of the Sunday-morning's penny; nor was it on Sunday morning that the labourer's wife was seen returning from the open door of the butcher's shop, with the weekly treat of beef or mutton for her expecting family. The wages of the labourer had been duly received on the evening of Friday instead of Saturday; (for the neighbouring farmers had found but little inconvenience in complying with Dr. Langham's request to alter the usual day of payment;) and the children were careful to remind their fathers or mothers of the promised Saturday penny before the day had closed; for they knew that every shopkeeper in the village had agreed to the resolution, that for each article sold on Sunday a double price should be paid; and that what had been so gained, and was not therefore, strictly

speaking, their own lawful profit, should be laid by as a parish fund for the relief of those who might need it. While, therefore, it was *possible* to procure what an unforeseen accident might render necessary, it was very certain that, from interest alone, if influenced by no higher motive, no one would purchase that which was not so; and the village of Langham presented an appearance of quiet peacefulness which it is sadly to be feared is becoming too rare among us.

It would however be too much to hope, that all should agree thus universally to hallow God's sacred day; and the children, as they passed on, observed, and pointed out to Miss Howard, the four-wheeled chaise at the door of a retired tradesman, in which two of his daughters were already seated, about to spend the sabbath among *their* former companions in the neighbouring town.

“It *is* a pity, my love,” said Miss Howard, in reply to Louisa's observation, “that this beautiful sabbath stillness should have such an interruption; but we will hope that Mr. Morgan and his family will, ere long, acquire

a taste for higher pleasures; and then they will feel how far superior is the enjoyment of a sabbath spent in the service of God."

Groups of clean and neatly-dressed children, with book and bag, were flocking to the door of the school-house; and nearly a hundred were assembled, when Miss Howard entered it, with Caroline and Louisa, a few minutes before the clock struck nine. They were kindly received by Mr. Robinson, the excellent rector of the parish, who always made a point of being himself present to offer up the morning prayer, and who gladly welcomed his two young teachers; and then, introducing them to their class, he divided it according to their wish.

"Have you brought your little sister to school, Mary?" he inquired from the elder of two little girls, neatly dressed in brown stuff frocks, who now approached him.

"If you please, sir," she replied, with a low curtsy;—(and Caroline, turning round, recognised her little flower-girl, Mary Smith, with her younger sister, Betsey;)—"and if you please, sir," she added, with some hesi-

tation, "mother said, if you'd please to hear her read, perhaps she might be forward enough to go into Miss Langham's class; because I've been teaching her every bit of spare time I've had since harvest—ever since Miss Langham told us she was coming to the Sunday school."

The little girl was found sufficiently advanced, and placed, to her great delight, among the scholars of Caroline, to whom she soon, with great eagerness, imparted the intelligence that "her new frock, her nice new frock," as well as her sister's, had been purchased with the money which they had obtained for "the flowers that Miss Langham had given them."

"I am glad that my flowers have been so useful to you," replied Caroline; "and that you have a nice frock to come to school in, which I hope will keep you warm through the winter. Can any of you tell me why it is that we wear clothes?"

"To keep us warm!" exclaimed several voices.

"Yes, to be sure," replied Caroline, almost

smiling at the simplicity of her own question ; —“ but then, when Adam and Eve were first made, when they lived in the beautiful garden of Eden, they never felt cold ; for they were perfectly happy there, and never felt any thing that was painful or unpleasant before they sinned against God. When was it that they began to feel cold and hunger, and to wear clothes to cover themselves ?”

No one answered ; and Caroline continued :

“ What sin did Adam and Eve commit when they were in the garden of Eden ?”

“ Ate the fruit that God told them they must not eat,” said little Betsey Smith.

“ Yes, Betsey,” replied Caroline ; “ and it was after this sad event that we read in our bibles, ‘ God made them coats of skins,’—when they had become sinful ; and he punished them by turning them out of the garden :—You do not suppose that Adam and Eve would have been proud of the smartest clothes that could have been given them ?”

“ No,” exclaimed several voices.

“ And we have quite as little reason,” replied Caroline, “ to be proud of our’s.

Suppose you were to see a man with the word "*thief*" fastened upon his forehead, should not you think him very silly, if he were *proud* of it, because the letters were of gold?"

"O, yes!" they all exclaimed.

"And yet," added Caroline, "we ought to be very thankful to God for giving us clothes to wear, which make us warm and comfortable;—for we must never forget, that every thing we enjoy comes from him; and even when Adam and Eve had been so wicked as to break the only commandment which he gave them, and God was so very much displeased with them; yet, even then, he thought of their comfort, and gave them clothes to cover themselves, when they were driven out of their pleasant garden;—so, you see, there are two things, of which our clothes may remind us, when we put them on in the morning, and take them off at night; our own sinfulness, and God's undeserved goodness to us.

"But who can tell me," continued Caroline, "what is the greatest proof of God's love?"

A variety of answers followed this question; to all of which Caroline patiently listened.

“But there is one thing,” said she, “which shows more than any of these, how very much God must have loved us, and how very much we ought to love him. I will tell it you in the words of the Bible; and then you must try to understand them: ‘God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.’”

“I’ve heard grandfather say that text,” said little Betsey Smith.

“No doubt, you have,” replied Caroline; “and now tell me—What did Christ do for us?”

“Died for us,” she replied.

“And why did he die for us?” again inquired Caroline.

No one answered; and Caroline continued:

“Because we were all sinners; we had all offended God, and broken his commandments;—when persons offend, or injure any of us, we are apt to think it a good reason for feeling very angry with them, and disliking them; but this was not the case with our blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ; though we have so deeply offended him, and still do offend him, yet he

loves us still, and so very much he has loved us, that he came down from heaven to die for us, and so to save us from that everlasting death which we have all brought upon ourselves by our sinfulness: and now, perhaps, you can understand what St. Paul means, when he says, ‘God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.’

“ But now, you must open your books, and we must begin to read our morning lesson.”

The books used by Caroline’s class consisted of easy passages selected from the New Testament; and in hearing and explaining these, she found full and pleasant employment until the bells chimed for church: the children were interested in her questions and remarks; and whenever she observed them inattentive, or apparently weary, she varied her instructions, and called back their wandering thoughts by asking them to spell the different words in their lesson; and Caroline thought, as she dismissed them all with tickets of reward for their good conduct, that

there was little danger of her becoming wearied in her new undertaking.

It was not the custom of Dr. Langham to send his servants out of church before the sermon was concluded, or the blessing of God implored upon the assembled worshippers; and therefore Miss Howard and Louisa reached the Priory on foot nearly as soon as Caroline, who rode with her mamma and papa, as some little time had elapsed after the service before the carriage was brought to the church door.

Mrs. Langham was still afraid of Caroline's exerting herself too much, and the whole of the class was therefore entrusted in the afternoon to Louisa, who again accompanied Miss Howard to the school. Louisa was surprised to find how much, both of her own and Caroline's instructions, had been remembered by the children; for the "new teachers" had excited more than ordinary curiosity; and it may fairly be allowed, that their attractive manners, and the degree of interest which they had mingled with the lesson, had done much to deepen the impression on the hearts

of the young learners ; at all events, Louisa thought that Miss Howard certainly was never more mistaken, than when she told her that she would not find her new employment so interesting as she expected.

Reading, followed by questions and explanations, occupied a considerable portion of the afternoon ; the children then repeated a few of Watts's hymns ; and Louisa almost distrusted the evidence of her senses, when she heard the chime of the church-bells at a quarter past three.

" O, indeed, dear Miss Howard !" she exclaimed, as she took her offered arm, after distributing tickets of reward to all her class, " I am quite sure I shall never be tired of my employment ; you know I have tried it now ; so you will allow me to know something about it ; and they have all been so very good --you would have been quite surprised to see how attentive they were. I am sure I could scarcely hope ever to have a class of better children ; and though you do smile rather incredulously, I am now quite certain that,

at all events, I shall never be tired of teaching in the Sunday school."

"No, my dear Louisa," replied Miss Howard, "you have misinterpreted my smile ; on the contrary, I am delighted with the beginning you have made, and I hope you will continue to take pleasure in it, though indeed you must not expect always to find your young pupils so very attentive and obedient as they have been to-day. There is to children a great charm in novelty,—but I will not discourage you, my love ; and I am sure you have exerted yourself very much."

Mrs. Langham walked to church in the afternoon whenever she felt able to do so ; and Louisa and Miss Howard, after leaving their classes in the charge of the schoolmistress, joined the rest of the family in the churchyard. The walk homewards, at the conclusion of the service, was delightful to the children, for there was a freshness all around, and an invigorating coolness in the air ; and they eagerly related to their papa all the various events of the day.

It was the custom of Caroline and Louisa to pass the first half-hour after their return from church, in their own room, and they then repaired to their mamma's dressing-room, with their prayer-books and bibles ; and, after repeating to her the collect for the day, they pointed out those verses of Scripture which they had selected, as illustrating the several points of doctrine which it recognised and alluded to.

An hour was thus pleasantly employed ; and Mrs. Langham was gratified to observe that the subject did not appear to have been less carefully studied, on account of the new undertaking which had been added to the sabbath employments.

At seven o'clock, the bell was rung for tea ; for the children always dined early on Sunday, with their papa and mamma, between the morning and afternoon services ; and it was a happy and affectionate, because a christian family, that assembled on that sabbath evening round the social hearth. The nights were becoming cold and wintry, and not unwelcome, therefore, was the brightly

blazing fire which had been lighted as the evening closed in, and which now diffused its cheery warmth on the happy faces which gathered round it at the conclusion of their evening meal. Caroline, though apparently quite recovered from her accident, was still weak, and reclined, by her mamma's desire, upon the sofa; and Louisa, after having what she called "a good warm," seated herself upon her favourite little stool at her mamma's feet.

"O, mamma!" she exclaimed, as she glanced round her, "how happy we all look!—and what a nice cheerful blaze! Do let me put out the candles;—all, I mean, except these two on the chimney-piece, and then we shall so enjoy it!"

"Your's must certainly be an hereditary taste, Louisa," said Mrs. Langham, smiling; "I do think there is something peculiarly cheering in the warm glow of a nice bright fire.—O no! I assure you I have not the least objection to your proposal."

Neither had any one else; and Louisa joyfully proceeded to put it in execution; then,

returning to her favourite seat, she drew her mamma's arm round her neck, and in all the simplicity of childhood, leaned her fair young head upon her knee.

"But, Louisa," said Dr. Langham, "have you forgotten our agreement for this evening?"

"O no, indeed, papa!" she replied; "I have learned my piece quite perfectly."

"Then now," added the Doctor, as he drew his chair more closely into the circle, "we are all, I hope, ready to contribute something to the store for the evening's enjoyment; for no one, you know, was to be excused—not even mamma and Miss Howard;" he continued, looking round him;—"but, I think, Louisa, as the youngest, should begin."

Louisa raised her head, and repeated, simply and prettily, Caroline Fry's little poem on Humility. It was followed by an interesting discussion, to which the poem gave rise; and Caroline was then called upon to contribute her portion. She had chosen that beautiful little hymn by Bishop Heber, beginning—

“Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,” and her father commended her choice. Miss Howard’s was that sublime ascription of praise to the Saviour, taken from Milman’s *Fall of Jerusalem*—

“For thou wert born of woman;”

and Mrs. Langham had selected from her favourite, Cowper, those consoling lines—

“God moves in a mysterious way,” &c.

So long and interesting a conversation on the providence of God then followed the recital of Mrs. Langham’s favourite hymn, that before Dr. Langham had time to contribute his part, the hour had arrived at which the servants usually assembled, on Sunday evening, for family reading and prayer; and, as it was already past the time at which the little girls usually retired to rest, they were dismissed to their room, congratulating themselves upon the prospect, that in less than another year Caroline would be fifteen, and that then they should remain down stairs on Sunday evenings, until ten o’clock.

A CHRISTMAS VISIT.

THE breakfast service had been for some time removed from the table in the centre, and a cheerful English fire was blazing brightly in the grate of Mrs. Maxwell's morning room, when Emily Maxwell and Louisa Langham re-entered it; carrying with them their sketch-books and pencils, and followed by Caroline with her workbox; with which, after warming her hands, she sat down by a little table on one side of the fire-place, and commenced her morning's employment: Emily and Louisa, however, rubbed their hands a little longer, declaring, that as their seats were necessarily farther from the fire than Caroline's, it was but fair that they should secure an additional supply of heat: at length, however, they placed

themselves on each side of the table, and, opening their sketch-books, were very soon busily at work.

“ I cannot think, Caroline,” said Louisa, “ that papa and mamma would have any objection to our going with Emily to Mrs. Harcourt’s ball on Friday night : you know there will only be children like ourselves, at least none very much older, and I cannot see what harm it can possibly do us.”

“ I never asked mamma,” replied Caroline, “ *why* she did not like us to go to children’s balls, so I cannot tell you what her objections are ; but I think, Louisa dear, she would rather that we did not go ; because, if you remember, she refused an invitation for us last winter, from Lady Russell, to a similar kind of party.”

“ Only we were a year younger then,” interrupted Louisa ; “ but I am sure if you really think that mamma would rather we did not go, I would not hesitate for a moment about giving it up.”

“ I do think she would,” replied Caroline, “ and at all events it is best to be upon the

safe side ; so I think, as aunt and uncle have given us leave to please ourselves, since they do not object to our staying at home, it will be better to give up this visit, than run the risk of doing any thing which mamma would not approve."

" O I am sure," exclaimed Emily, " that mamma will be very glad to have you at home with her ; but yet I should like very much for you to go, particularly as you have never been to a ball, and do not know how nice it is."

" I hardly know whether we should find it very pleasant," replied Caroline, " because, being quite unaccustomed to such scenes, we should feel so awkward."

" O, no danger of that !" replied Emily, " I am sure you would enjoy it very much, and I could send you plenty of partners, for I always have abundance of them. I do not know how those poor girls manage who have not, it must be dreadfully dull for them. At the ball we had at school before the holidays, I noticed that the two Miss Westons sat still all the evening,—except once, when Mrs. Mark-

ham introduced them to some partners,—and they did look so ill-tempered about it.”

“And could not you send them any of yours?” inquired Louisa.

“O they were such plain girls,” replied Emily, “it was of no use to recommend them; besides they did not dance well, so I thought it was much better for them to sit still. Annie Cameron introduced her brother to them at last, and he is so good-natured he would have danced with one of them, but they did not happen to know the Caledonian quadrilles, so Annie brought him to me, and he was the pleasantest partner I had all the evening.”

“So I should think,” replied Caroline, “from his kindness in offering to dance with those whom he saw neglected.”

“I am sure I should have liked him!” exclaimed Louisa, “if it were only for that one thing.”

“You would like him for many things,” replied Emily, “for he is a very nice boy, very like my cousin Edward, only so much older; and as for Annie Cameron, she is the very nicest girl you ever saw; and although she is

sixteen now, she is just as pleasant as though she were only twelve or thirteen like us. She was but a year and a half at school, and every one cried to part with her, she was such a favourite; particularly among us younger ones. I hope they are going to Mrs. Harcourt's; but we shall know to-day, for they are to call here." The door opened while Emily was speaking; and Colonel Maxwell entered, with Edward Langham, a fine boy of about eleven years of age, his open and expressive countenance still glowing with the warmth of his recent exercise.

"Emily," he exclaimed, "you must indeed all of you come with us to-morrow morning down to the pool to see the skating! you have no idea how very pretty it is, we have so enjoyed it."

"I should have questioned, Teddy," said the Colonel, smiling, "whether it had been much enjoyment to you at present."

"I don't mind a few tumbles," replied Edward, "every one must expect them in learning to skate. I shall have another race with Charles Cameron to-morrow morning,

and I do not mean that he shall win it quite so easily."

"Talking of Cameron reminds me, Caroline, my love," said the Colonel, "to inquire whether any of you have answered Mrs. Harcourt's note of invitation to you all for Friday next."

"Not at present, uncle," replied Caroline, "but I thought of doing so this morning; and if you and my aunt have no objection, we think mamma would rather that we should decline the visit, as we are not accustomed to go to balls."

"Certainly, my love," replied the Colonel, "I should wish you to do what you think your mamma would approve."

"Thank you, uncle," replied Caroline, "then I will go now to my aunt, she is in the library writing, and I will write a note directly to Mrs. Harcourt, if aunt thinks it proper for me to do so; for we should both like to thank her for her kindness:" and so saying, Caroline immediately left the room.

"I suppose you mean to go, Edward," said the Colonel, addressing his nephew.

“ I should like very much to do so, uncle,” he replied, “ because Charles Cameron told me that he should be there ; but I am sure I would not, if I thought papa or mamma would not wish me to go.”

“ I think I can venture to answer for that,” said the Colonel, smiling ; “ if they scold, you must lay all the blame upon me.”

“ I am not afraid of being *scolded*, uncle,” replied Edward, while his face flushed for the moment with a deeper hue ; “ and I would bear the blame myself, if I deserved it ; but I would not willingly do any thing which I thought papa or mamma would not approve.”

“ And God forbid that I should ever attempt, my boy, to weaken so noble a principle !” exclaimed the Colonel, as he warmly shook his hand. My sister is indeed happy in her children !”

“ Should we not be very ungrateful children, dear uncle,” said Louisa, “ if with such a papa and mamma as ours, and with so many indulgences as we receive from them, we did not do every thing in our power to please them ? I do not know what mamma would say about Edward ;

but she refused a similar invitation for Caroline and me last winter; so I suppose she would rather that we did not accept this."

"You were quite right then, my love," said the Colonel, "in refusing it."

"Or rather Caroline was," replied Louisa, "for I was very curious to see a ball, and did not think of it until Caroline reminded me."

"And how does the perspective drawing go on?" inquired the Colonel, as he looked over the sketches of the two little girls; each of whom was making from the point where she sat, a drawing of the room with its furniture. "Why, Emily! Louisa is making a much more rapid progress than you."

"I am more accustomed than Emily to this kind of drawing," said Louisa; "and besides, Emily has taken out again all one side of her room."

"Yes," interrupted Emily, "which I was very much inclined to leave in error (for it certainly would not have diminished the beauty of the drawing to make the room a little longer), till Louisa reminded me that I

was sketching for improvement, and not for mere amusement."

"I always find," said Louisa, "that when I have suffered one error in a sketch to pass uncorrected, others are sure to accumulate upon it; and then one is apt to grow tired of it, and we fancy it will never look well if we finish it; and so it gets laid aside; at least, I know this used to be the case with me, not only in drawing, but in many other things, until mamma pointed out to me the source of the evil, and helped me to set about conquering it."

"I cannot think how it is, Louisa," said Emily; "you and Caroline always seem to be thinking of what it is *right* to do, in things where I should never think of right and wrong. I noticed yesterday, when Caroline was playing, she suddenly stopped, and exclaimed, 'O dear me, this is not right!'"

"Because she promised mamma," said Louisa, "that she would practise for an hour every morning; and she knew that she ought to be learning the difficult parts of her piece, and not playing over the easy varia-

tions, which had no difficulties to conquer. Mamma always tells us it is a great mistake to fancy that we must only have recourse to our professed principles for direction upon great occasions, which may not occur half a dozen times in a person's life, while we violate them in trifles every hour of the day; she said;"—and here Louisa blushed and hesitated, then took up her pencil, and continued her drawing.

"Well, my love," said the Colonel, smiling, "and what did she say?"

"I was only going to tell Emily, uncle," replied Louisa, "that mamma often reminded us of that text, 'Whatsoever ye do, do it *heartily* 'as unto the Lord, and not unto men.'"

Caroline at that moment entered the room, with a note, which she placed in her uncle's hands. "My aunt told me," said she, "that you would pass Mrs. Harcourt's house this morning, uncle, in your ride; and that she had no doubt you would be kind enough to leave this note for us at the lodge."

"And so you really have refused to join this gay party?" said the Colonel.

“Yes, uncle,” replied Caroline, with a smile; “but we shall not be able to claim much credit for self-denial, for aunt is so very kind as to promise to invite Miss Cameron to spend the evening with us, if she is not engaged to the party.”

“Well, Teddy, my boy,” said the Colonel, as he placed the note in his waistcoat pocket; “I suppose horse and pony are ready for us?” and, followed by Edward, he left the room.

A few minutes afterwards, Mrs. Maxwell entered, bringing with her a book which they had begun to read the evening before; and Caroline volunteered her services to read aloud to the rest. The offer was gladly accepted, and an hour was thus pleasantly employed, when the sound of wheels was heard approaching, and Emily jumped from the table, exclaiming, “Annie Cameron!—sure to be!”

“Wait a moment, Emily,” said Mrs. Maxwell; “do not go into the hall until you are sure who it is;” and Emily had, with some reluctance, resumed her seat, though not her occupation, when the servant announced that

the two Miss Millers were in the drawing-room.

“The disagreeable girls!” exclaimed Emily, “whatever do they want here? Mamma, I wish we had been out—and we were so comfortable.”

“You had better bring them here, Goodwin,” said Mrs. Maxwell; for the fire is scarcely lighted in the drawing-room. I certainly do not think them very desirable companions for you, Emily,” she added, as he closed the door behind him; “and am rather surprised at their calling here; but, my love, you must remember that they have had no mother to direct them, and are therefore, in some degree, entitled to our pity. I shall be happy if I can be in any way of service to them.”

The door, as she spoke, was thrown open by Goodwin; and two young ladies entered of about twelve and fifteen years of age. They were kindly received by Mrs. Maxwell, though not very cordially by Emily, and threw themselves rather listlessly upon the chairs which were placed for them.

“We called, Mrs. Maxwell,” said the elder of the young ladies, after some cursory remarks had passed upon the beauty and the “excessive coldness” of the morning; “we called to ask you if you would allow Miss Maxwell, as one of our schoolfellows, to join us in a dance which papa has promised us on Tuesday evening. We expect about fifty-three young ladies and gentlemen; and Charlotte is anxious to secure Miss Maxwell for a companion, as there will be so few of her own age. Papa told us to write a note,” she continued, not observing much expression of pleasure in Mrs. Maxwell’s countenance; “but we thought, as we were going out for a drive this morning, it would be as well to call, and make the request in person.”

Emily threw her head back with a sort of yawn, which appeared to be misinterpreted by Miss Miller; for she exclaimed, “We find the holidays so dreadfully dull, that I do not know what will become of us before they are over!—I declare I should like school better than home, if we had not so much to

do; for there is something to amuse one there."

"But how shall you contrive to amuse yourselves when you leave school?" inquired Mrs. Maxwell with a smile.

"O, then we shall be introduced, and have plenty of company," she replied. "Papa tells us sometimes, that he expects we shall turn his house inside out. I only wish the time were come."

"You will soon be wearied of mere amusement," said Mrs. Maxwell; "nothing is more fatiguing than excitement; and almost any pursuit will prove tedious and unsatisfying, if it have not some useful end in view."

"I should think you intend to get the prize for drawing next half-year, Emily," said the younger Miss Miller. "I never dream of such a thing as touching a pencil in holiday times."

"O dear me, no!" replied her sister, with a somewhat affected shrug of the shoulders. "I'm sure we've enough of that, in all conscience, at school. Do you draw every day?"

"Not every day," replied Emily, slightly

reddening; "but you *know* I am very fond of drawing, and mamma always wishes me to have some employment; and, besides, I could not be happy if I were to do nothing."

"O gracious!" exclaimed Miss Miller, with a languishing air; "how I wish I were like you; but I remember you were always a little plodding thing at school. Well, for my part, I never think of any thing connected with school in the holidays; except that I do sometimes strum a few little airs upon the piano. I could not exist without a piano, and the novels from Mr. Spencer's library. I suppose you've read Lady Bulwer's last new one?"

"No, indeed we have not," replied Mrs. Maxwell, with a smile; "I believe we are all too busy here, to have much time left for novel-reading, even if we were inclined so to employ it; and certainly I should be very cautious how I allowed Emily to indulge a habit so pernicious."

"Well, papa does tell us sometimes," replied Miss Miller, "that we are too young to read so much; and perhaps Charlotte may

be ; but I think, as in twelvemonths I am to come out into the world, it is time for me to know some little about it."

"I fear you will find yourself very much deceived," replied Mrs. Maxwell, "if you expect to gain much insight into the real state of society from most of our modern novel writers ; depend upon it, the knowledge of it you acquire from such sources you would be much better without."

"Do not you ever allow novels to be read in your house?" inquired Miss Charlotte Miller.

"The word novel is so general a term," replied Mrs. Maxwell, "that I might perhaps mislead you if I said, No. I do not positively exclude all works of fiction, but we use them very sparingly. I think your mamma, Caroline, does not entirely prohibit them?"

"O, no," replied Caroline, "we have several in our own library, but we generally read them with mamma or Miss Howard ; or else Miss Howard reads aloud while we are drawing. We just finished, before Christmas,

Mrs. Woodrooffe's *Shades of Character*; but mamma never allows us to take a book from the library, without first bringing it to her, to see whether she approves of our reading it."

"I should not much like that," said Miss Miller, "for, I must confess, I get some that I do not think papa would be very much pleased for me to read, if he were to know. But, Charlotte, we must say, Good morning, or we shall keep papa waiting lunch. Then we may expect Emily to our ball on this day week?" she added, turning to Mrs. Maxwell; "and these young ladies, if they are staying with her, we shall be happy of course to see them too."

"Emily is already engaged to a party on Friday, which I intend to be the last she will attend this winter; and the Miss Langhams decline these invitations altogether."

Miss Miller looked at them with an expression of pity, mingled with no small portion of contempt, as she exclaimed, "Dear me! I should think you must be very dull; then added, after a pause, as she rose

from her seat, "Then we must not expect to see Miss Maxwell?"

Mrs. Langham repeated her refusal, and rang for the carriage, and the young ladies enveloping themselves, with many a shudder at the cold, in their richly ermined cloaks, wished the party a good morning, and drove away. "Poor girls!" said Mrs. Maxwell, "what a pity it is that they are left so much to themselves as they appear to be; I do hope, for their sakes, that there is some truth in the report of Mr. Miller's intended marriage with Mrs. Hamilton, for she is a strong-minded, sensible woman, and would supply to these poor girls a mother's place."

"They are idle things," said Emily, "they are never likely to know anything, when they take no pains to learn. That Miss Miller does give herself such airs too, and yet, ever since they have been at school, they have hardly ——"

"We must not hear tales of school, Emily," interrupted Mrs. Maxwell, "unless they are tales of good."

"Then I must talk about Annie Cameron,"

said Emily, "for I think she is the only one that I can say much good about. And here she does really come, I do think!" she exclaimed, as she ran to the window; "walking, and Charles with her, I believe! I am so glad those abominable Miss Millers are gone; yes, here they are! it is Annie!" and Emily darted from the room to welcome her friend.

They soon re-entered it together, and Mrs. Maxwell introduced Charles and his sister to her nieces. Annie Cameron was a tall, graceful girl of sixteen; her complexion was delicately fair, and her generally pale face was tinged, after her long walk, with a slight flush of pink. The dark brown hair was smoothly braided over her beautiful forehead; and Caroline and Louisa thought, as they looked at her, that they had never seen any one so exquisitely lovely. The delicate outline of her face was in the Grecian style, and the long sweeping lashes which veiled her dark blue eye, gave an expression of modest gentleness to her countenance, which no one could help admiring; yet it was not face or feature, but an utter forgetfulness of

self, a certain sweetness and simplicity of manner, as indescribable as inimitable, which constituted the principal charm of Annie Cameron's fascination, and rendered her so universally the object of affection among all who knew her.

Louisa's earnest gaze was riveted upon her as soon as she entered the room ; and even Caroline, who was less accustomed to display her feelings, could not but acknowledge to herself that there was something peculiarly interesting about the young stranger.

" Well, Annie," inquired Emily, with great eagerness, " I want sadly to know whether you are going to Mrs. Harcourt's ball on Friday night."

" No, Emily, I am not," she replied, " for I wrote yesterday to decline Mrs. Harcourt's kind invitation for myself and sisters ; but Charles intends to go."

" Yes, I know," replied Emily, " but I am sorry you are not going. O mamma, I almost think I would rather stay at home."

" It is too late now, my love, to think about that," said Mrs. Maxwell, " for you know that

it was chiefly Mrs. Harcourt's kindness for you that induced her to give this party; under any other circumstances I should myself have proposed your declining the invitation, as your cousins do not accept it."

"O yes, mamma, I know," said Emily, smiling; "but then," she added, with a nod of the head, and an unsuccessful attempt to look ill-humoured, "I never thought of your securing all the best of the company at home."

"Thank you, Emily!" exclaimed Charles Cameron, "that is a compliment indeed to us who have been so unfortunate as to accept Mrs. Harcourt's invitation."

"O I forgot,"—said Emily, blushing, and hesitating how to explain what she meant.

"Never mind, my love," said Mrs. Maxwell, "such blunders in a little girl like you are always excusable. Charles must consider your compliment to his sister as an equivalent for your want of politeness to himself."

"No, indeed, Emily," said Charles, mischievously enjoying the poor child's confusion; "I cannot allow my share of politeness to be paid over to Annie; so remember I shall expect some very pretty speech to be ready

for me by the time I return. I am going to extend my walk a little farther," he added, addressing Mrs. Maxwell, "if you will permit me to leave Annie here; for I understand there is a person in the village who will have some nice geraniums to dispose of in the spring, some of which I should like to secure; for now that Annie is going to stay at home, it will be a nice amusement for us to attend to the greenhouse. Is my little pet, Alfred, at home?" he added; perhaps you will allow me to take him with me; I will take care not to tire him, and bring him back to you safely in about an hour's time."

"Alfred, I am sure, will be highly delighted to accompany you," replied Mrs. Maxwell; and, ringing the bell, she desired that he might be brought down.

The little fellow was soon equipped for his walk, and came down very joyfully at his mamma's summons. Charles took him by the hand, and they were very soon out of sight.

"And so you have quite left school, Annie," said Mrs. Maxwell, "and are now going to remain at home with your mamma."

"Yes, I have," she replied; "I am very

young to do so, but it is natural that mamma should wish to have me at home with her, and I think I may be useful in assisting her to instruct my sisters. You are aware," continued Annie, "that in consequence of my papa's early and sudden death, very little provision had been made for mamma, and her income is very small until Charles comes of age, because the estate is entailed upon him. I know that when that time comes, it will be his first care to secure to her every comfort to which she has been accustomed; but, at present, we must of course be economical. Mamma very much regretted that Miss Herbert's health obliged her to give up her pupils, for everything was conducted by her upon such a very nice plan."

"I was going to inquire from you, Annie," said Mrs. Maxwell, "whether there is any probability of her health being re-established; if so, and she would receive Emily as a pupil, I should be very glad to place her under her care."

"I hope there is some probability of her commencing a school again in a year or two. I am very anxious for her to do so on my sisters' account; for I am sure, if there is any

chance of placing them with her, mamma would never think of sending them anywhere else. I very much regretted not being able to remain with her a year or two longer."

"But you will be able to go on improving yourself, Annie, while you assist in the instruction of your sisters," said Mrs. Maxwell.

"O yes," she replied, "I intend to do so; mamma has very kindly promised that I shall continue to take lessons upon the harp; and there is an excellent German master within reach. Mamma has assisted me to sketch out a course of history, too, to read with my sisters; and I have, in our rector, Dr. Burton, a most kind and judicious friend and adviser, with regard to the works which will be best for me to read myself. He has promised to send me, next week, a list of the best works of our English poets; and I am going to begin Tasso with mamma; so you see I have plenty to do."

"You have, indeed," replied Mrs. Maxwell, "but how very much better that is, my dear Annie, than coming home and spending your time in a listless round of visiting and gaiety; a burden to yourself, and of no use to any one else in the world."

“ O yes, it is indeed, replied Annie, and I think we shall be very happy ; besides Charles will be at home with us, reading with Dr. Burton until it is time for him to go to Oxford ; and we have such kind friends in you and Colonel Maxwell ; though our circle is necessarily limited, the friends we have are very, very dear to us.”

“ We have two other young ladies here, Annie, who are very anxious to be entered upon your list. They have declined attending Mrs. Harcourt’s ball, and I promised them, that if you were disengaged, I would endeavour to secure you to spend the evening with us. It will be too late for you to return at night ; but, if you can make your arrangements at home, we can provide you with a bed, and then Charles can return with the Colonel ; and we will send you both home on Saturday.”

“ You are very kind, my dear Mrs. Maxwell,” replied Annie, “ and I should have been delighted to accept your kind offer, but mamma is not very well : the scenes of my poor papa’s illness and death always seem to recur to her so forcibly at this season of the

year, that I should not like to leave her alone, particularly in the evening; for Lucy and Rosa are too young to be very companionable at present."

"Well, Carry," said Mrs. Maxwell, "this will be a great disappointment to you; but I do not know what argument you can bring forward against such an excuse."

"O, no!" replied Caroline, "the motive is too amiable for us to wish to alter the decision, if we could, however great our own disappointment may be; and Emily has described her friend, Miss Cameron, to us in such glowing terms, that we *shall* be very sorry not to have an opportunity of knowing more of her."

"Emily seems to have been determined," said Annie, with a smile, "to secure beforehand our friendship for each other, for I too have heard very much from her of her cousins Langham."

"O because I knew you would just suit each other," said Emily; "but, mamma, perhaps Annie can come some other day, when I am at home, and that will be better still."

"I will walk over some morning," said

Annie, "if you will have me, and spend the early part of the day with you."

"We shall be very happy, my love, to have you whenever you can come," replied Mrs. Maxwell, "and if your mamma will spare you to dine with us, we will take care to send you home directly after dinner."

"Thank you, that I dare say she will do," replied Annie; "she is generally fully occupied during the day: it is only in the evening that I do not like to leave her alone."

"There come papa and Edward!" exclaimed Emily, "returning from their ride. Mamma, we have not been out this beautiful day; may we walk back part of the way with Annie, instead of going out for a drive?"

"It will do you more good, my love, than riding," replied Mrs. Maxwell, "if your cousins would like it as well."

They both declared that they should very much prefer it, when Colonel Maxwell and Edward entered the room.

"Ah! Annie, my love, how do?" said the Colonel, as he warmly shook her hand. "You are come to spend the day with us! Maria, my dear," he continued, turning to his

wife ; “ Ted and I are so hungry after our ride. Is there any prospect of our seeing lunch come in soon ? You cannot think how busy we have been since we saw you, and how many important affairs we have transacted ; why Ted has written two letters for me this morning : he would be worth five pounds a year to any one as private secretary. My love, is the lunch ready, did you say ? ”

“ I dare say we shall find it in the dining-room,” said Mrs. Maxwell, “ or ready to be brought there. We were waiting for Charles Cameron as well as you ; he has taken Alfred down into the village with him, but I suppose he will not be very long ; at all events he will return before we have finished ; and, after luncheon, we are to walk part of the way back with him and Annie, on condition that she comes over again and spends a long day with us.”

“ And if Colonel Maxwell is not too much tired, and too busy,” said Louisa, looking archly at her uncle ; “ we shall be very happy to have the pleasure of his company too.”

“ O yes, uncle, do come with us,” said

Caroline, "and we shall be such a nice merry party."

"I do not know," said the Colonel, smiling, "whether I dare trust myself among you; there is a young lady whom I once heard telling a gentleman to be sure to keep his ears under his hat when he passed through the turnpike gate; and perhaps I may receive some such compliment."

"O no, uncle," exclaimed Louisa, blushing crimson, "it was only to Mr. Clodpole I said that, and I know it was wrong to say it even to him; you made me quite ashamed of it at the time; and I was, and I am, very much obliged to you:—but, uncle," she added, raising her eyes, in which the tears were almost starting, to his, "that is a long time ago."

"It is, my love," he replied, "quite long enough to have been forgotten, particularly as no similar incident has since occurred to recall it to our remembrance; and I did not mean to distress you," he added, as he affectionately kissed her flushed cheek, "by thus reminding you of it."

"O never mind," said Louisa, "I dare say it will do me good, though indeed I had a

lesson that day which I hope I shall never forget."

"And what was that, my love?" inquired her uncle.

"Why, uncle," replied Louisa, "some time before I had made a very foolish remark about Mr. Robinson's curate, Mr. Seymour, who you may remember is very deeply marked by small-pox. I do not know how I happened to do so, for I have the greatest possible esteem for him; but unhappily there were two young ladies present, who were silly enough to think that what I said was very witty, and so they repeated it to others, until it reached Mr. Seymour's ear, and mamma heard of it that day, and said she thought it would be quite sufficient punishment for me if she told me how he caught the small-pox; and indeed it was, for I little thought what I had been ridiculing."

"And what was it, my love?" said Mrs. Maxwell; "for now that you have excited our interest, you must not conclude your story without gratifying it."

"Mamma told me," continued Louisa, "that in the parish where he lived before he

came to Langham, there was a poor woman, a widow, the mother of nine children, attacked by a most virulent kind of small-pox—so much so that the neighbours could hardly be prevailed upon to go near her, and Mr. Seymour had all the children taken away, and took care of them, except the eldest girl, who had been already exposed to the infection, and she waited upon her mother until she was taken ill, and very soon died ; which made the neighbours more frightened still, and the poor creature would have been quite neglected, if it had not been for Mr. Seymour ; but he said he had neither wife nor children, and his life was of less consequence than hers, and so he went to see her, and gave her her medicines, when hardly any one else would venture into the house, till at last the danger was passed, and then he was attacked by the same disease ; and mamma said, that after long and severe suffering he rose from his bed, instead of the fine handsome young man he had formerly been, what he now is, and will be as long as he lives.—But then, who would think of that ?” said Louisa, while her eyes sparkled with animation : “ and so the next time I saw him I

begged his pardon, and told him how very very sorry I was that I had been so foolish and so wicked, and that I revered and loved him more than ever. And then he told me, so kindly, that he hoped I would not think it had distressed him; and as to the thing itself, he said he had pursued what appeared to him to be the path of duty, and had left the event in the hands of that Providence, who he had no doubt had ordered all wisely. And then he laughed, and said that if he had had a handsome face, he might perhaps have been proud of it."

"Indeed, my love," said Mrs. Maxwell, "I have no doubt that it will be a lesson to you, not easily to be forgotten. But now, suppose we proceed to the dining-room, and Charles will join us there."

Annie Cameron affectionately offered her hand to Louisa, by whom it was frankly accepted; and they all followed Colonel and Mrs. Maxwell to the dining-room. Charles and Alfred soon arrived, and joined the party; and the little fellow chattered away, highly delighted with his walk and his friend Charles.

When lunch was finished, the whole of the party, excepting Alfred, who was dismissed

to the nursery, prepared for their walk, and were very soon ready to set out. The sun had not been sufficiently powerful to make much impression upon the roads, hardened as they were by the five days' previous frost; and the keen bracing air was delightful to children who were not accustomed to sit in stove-heated rooms, and shudder at the least breath of the wintry air of a December day.

"How delightfully pleasant it is," said Louisa; "it is so nice for us all to come out together. I wish you were all coming back with us to Langham, as well as Emily—and my little pet Alfred into the bargain; what a merry party we should be!"

"I shall be very glad to see mamma again," said Caroline; "for we never were so long away from her before; but really I shall be almost sorry when papa comes to fetch us, next week—we are so very happy here. I hope Emily will enjoy her visit as much at Langham."

"O, to be sure I shall!" exclaimed Emily; "only I wish we could take Annie with us; but then I know, if we could, she would not leave her mamma."

"We cannot hope to have every thing that

we should like," said Annie, "concentrated at one time, into one place; and no doubt it is better for us, that, as mamma says, the flowers should be scattered here and there along the whole of our path, than that they should grow in clusters which would delight and dazzle us for a time, only to make the blank deserts between these oases the more desolate and dreary by the contrast."

"And you really think, then," said Mrs. Maxwell, "that this is the case?"

"I do, indeed," replied Annie; "there are surely few of our days' journeys which are not enlivened by some bright flowerets, if we would but give ourselves the trouble to look around us for them."

"It is curious," said the Colonel, "to see how much trouble some persons will give themselves to search out causes for grumbling; but I think the most ingenious attempt of the kind I ever heard of, was that of the farmer who, when one of his friends was congratulating him, last summer, upon the delightful weather he had had for gathering in his abundant crops, replied, in a surly tone, 'Yes, but then there'll be no bad hay for the cows!'"

“And by way of illustration of a more happy temperament,” said Annie, “a lady of our acquaintance called one morning last summer, to take mamma out for a drive, but finding her too unwell to venture out, she staid with us some little time, and had scarcely left the house when it began to rain, and continued, for the next two hours, to rain incessantly. She had an open carriage, and I thought must have been sadly wet; so I said, the next time I saw her, how sorry I was that she had had so uncomfortable a ride! ‘O, not at all!’ she replied, ‘for I had an umbrella, and the nice fresh rain made every thing smell so deliciously sweet!’”

“I would earnestly recommend all young persons,” said Mrs. Maxwell, “to cultivate the habit of looking on the bright side of their *present lot*; and even for the future, we should be careful not needlessly to anticipate evils, though prudence may require us always to be prepared for misfortune;—and if your good mamma were here, Caroline, I dare say she would tell us, that none but the true Christian can possess, under every changing circumstance, that happy temper of mind

which steers a safe course between discontent and despondency on the one side, and levity and thoughtlessness on the other."

"I dare say she would," replied Caroline; "because, you know, dear aunt, only the true Christian can feel that firm trust in the overruling providence of God, that will make him cheerfully, while he diligently pursues the path of duty, leave the direction of events in the hands of Him who is sure to do every thing right."

"It is a happy thing for us," observed Annie, "that the direction of our affairs is not left to ourselves; for, if it were, with what fear and trembling should we take every step in life, uncertain what its consequences might be."

The time passed pleasantly on in friendly chat, until Mrs. Maxwell thought it was time to return home; and, again reminding Annie of her promise, and including Charles in the invitation, they turned their steps homewards, walking briskly on, in order to avoid exposure to the evening mist.